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OLD CREEDS AND
NEW NEEDS . . .

OLD CREEDS AND NEW NEEDS *By*

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TO

MY BELOVED SON

“The way of light is to ask for light.”

We who have compiled this little book are not one, but many. We who seek along these lines, finding utterance of our quest now on this page, now on that, are not one, but many.

FOREWORDS

A FEW thoughts have here been set down on those creeds which have, as their central teaching, some revelation made by a man who was held to be unlike other men, in that he held truth in a way that was unlike the way of other men. It is often said that such men did not actually live on earth. It is also said that they did live on earth, but that among them a few were not man only, but God as well. Or it is said that they were resolved into a god after leaving earth.

It is not a very easy subject to deal with. The writer has only attempted to do so for the end to which this book was written. And that is to ask, not scholar or learned critic, but the general reader what—seeing that there is all this surviving evidence of these few men in the past helping their fellows in so remarkable a way—what is

his view on two points. How far did those few men or one of them help the whole world for all time? And, Will there ever be other such helpers?

It is not claimed that we have so answered these questions here as to convince the reader. Rather we wish to see readers themselves framing the answers. The book aims only at being a way-shower to both the asking and the way to seek the answers. We have no special knowledge in any part of the subject save a little in one of the sections. We are not aiming at contributing new materials. We only wish to suggest and to stimulate.

The book will not please anyone who is definitely committed to any one of the old-established creeds. Neither will it please those who reject all creeds, because they are without faith in the reality of anything that is supersensuous. It is not written to seek approval from any of these quarters. We humbly seek for what is true, and, speaking for all honest seekers, we want no greater joy than to be ourselves led to

truth we do not yet see. We know it is a very high quest, and a very hard one. We are all of us only children in our efforts, extraordinarily ignorant. It is only the veriest children among us who hold themselves to be wise.

But we believe that the way to find truth is not one that is impossible to the wayfarer who honestly seeks truth, that is, the true things, the true relations between things or happenings. It may be that to have essayed to do this in respect of the subject of this little book will stimulate others to make the essay and to go farther, in the way that seeks only the true, than we have been able to do. For no man will say that we are alone in our special quest. It is the quest of all the world, though the world know it not.

We shall not get far in this way. It is the way, and yet great is the way to the light that we have to go. But if men and women begin to take to that open road as the quest of their hearts, there is no end to which the earth may not one day attain.

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Old Creeds and New Needs

I

THE MESSENGER-HELPER, HIS WORLD AND HIS TIME

THERE has been from time to time on earth a man whom earth has called Prophet, Saviour, Sage, Light of the World, Son of God, Wise, Enlightened. Such men as these of whom we have any record have been few in number. But their work and their words have filled the earth in a way that no other men's work and words have filled it. We see their work and their words persisting long after they themselves have passed away, long after the need that called them forth in a very special way to teach some fundamental truth has gone by.

There is only one way in which we can tell whether the work and the words of these men, as they are recorded, are such that we can look to them for a complete guidance to life as it is in the world of to-day. And that is this: we must ask: Does their teaching fit the world of to-day? Can we guide our lives by it in such a way that we can, without further guidance, lead the best life we are capable of in the world into which we are born to-day?

It is a very difficult question to answer. These chosen men taught matters that were true not for their own age only, but for all time. They also taught some things that the special needs of their time called for. And these special needs may not be our special needs. Shall we on that account put aside their teaching altogether? Or shall we try to make the needs of those days our needs still? We cannot decide off-hand. We must consider what they taught, and also where they lived and when. We must then draw our own conclusion. We must not listen to those who say: "Put them

away. These be worn-out gospels!" Nor to those who say: "*This* man, not the others, spake as never man spake, as no man speaks, or will speak." Nor yet to those who say: "All spoke the Truth. We can find all we need for truth and guidance, if we select something from each." None of these ways is right.

And why? Because we live in other times, in other places, and therefore to some degree in a different world. Now what those men taught to meet special needs may no longer be required. And what they said which holds good for all time and every place is true, but it may not be all we need to know and all we need to live by. So we have also to ask how is our world different from their world? What is there we need to know and to be guided about, of which they said little or nothing?

It seems a great deal to expect of us. And it is a great deal. But we are able to learn and to know so much more than people formerly could learn and know. Our world has got much bigger, and yet we in a way

have got bigger too. We can go about and afar as people never used to do. We can read as people never used to read. We have millions of copies where people had only a few copies. Our copies are books in every language. Their copies were manuscripts in some one language. We know more of what is now going on in the world than people ever did before. We live as it were many lives in our one life. We know about the past more than people ever did, we know more about the present than ever before, and we can to some extent foresee the near future. We can therefore undertake such an enquiry without feeling overwhelmed by its difficulties. For the life of our times has so expanded our view and our opportunities that we are able to overcome those difficulties.

We see, then, that there may be, in this altered world, a need for more light and guidance than those old teachers gave to their world. It may have been sufficient for their world. We say "may," because we never really feel sure, as we read the old

scriptures about them, that we have there what they really said, or all that they really said. Indeed, we are sure that we have not there all that they said, for not seldom we are told that they spoke, but not what they then said. And may we not have much that they did not really say?

And this is another reason why no ancient gospel, as it has been handed down to us, is really such that we can say: "It is enough. We have it all. And we have it in the very words in which it was delivered." We know it is not true to say as much of any sermon or address delivered to-day, stenographed and printed in a newspaper the day after. How much less true is it to say that of utterances which no man took down in shorthand on the spot! How much less true is it to say that of utterances which were not set down but only remembered for years, nay, generations afterwards! How impossible is it to hope that in a passage of what is called Holy Writ, or such terms, we read the very words, even if we can read them in the very language of the teacher

who is recorded to have said them! Who is there to vouch that the writers were guided by *those who knew*?

We are on the whole more likely to get those utterances that met the needs of the time and the place. For words about these would appeal to the men to whom those needs were yet needs, and would be better fixed in their memory. We are less likely to get preserved the sayings on the more permanent needs. And more—we get but a faint, faded picture of the warm living personality of the teacher. This is because, when the recollections were set down in writing, no one was yet on earth who remembered him and whose love was clustering round a living image.

And so it has come about that, in measure as the Person of one or other of these very men grew in the after-time into something superhuman, something divine, something above all human frailty and impermanence, and became an object of the worship due to God alone, the features, the voice, the warm loving will and influence of the man's

presence has died away. In its place we have something that has been added by the worshippers. It is not the portrait of the friend men knew. It is the image of an ideal conception, made up from a sense of just those special needs he rose up to satisfy.

II

THE NEW WORLD, THE NEW TIME

It were too much to say that a teacher so deified no longer works for the good of mankind. He has so worked. This is because he did more than meet those special needs. He went beyond them in his teaching. He saw that men needed deeper-reaching help. He saw their more fundamental needs. He led them upward from the pit out of which they were trying to climb. He taught them what it was to be good. He taught them how awful it was to be bad. He taught them how they might lessen suffering by kindness, by honesty, by purity, by truthfulness.

But all this does not make even the most saintly teacher of the past sufficient to be the Buddha, the Saviour, the Prophet of

the world of to-day. He cannot meet the special needs of the world of to-day. And that is because they are of to-day, and his recorded words are of a world of long ago. We still need his general teachings, but we know that we need them. We do not need to have them come as a revelation. We teach them to our children, not because any Gospel says so, but because we are convinced our children, our world will be better, happier, in measure as those teachings of goodness, love, pure self-surrender, are carried out. And this is enough to make the following of them, even in a perfunctory way, the *will*, if not the conduct, of the majority.

But we need a new expansion of these general teachings. Our duty to our neighbour is not now only that of the kind man who is known as the Good Samaritan. Men have done as much for each other even when they have met as foes on the battlefield. Our duty to our neighbour now is, not only to succour him, but to see he needs no succour ! That is, we must neither declare war against

him nor must we neglect him. Our duty to our neighbour is to live at peace with him, to serve him rather than to compete with him, to will his prosperity no less than our own, to meet him in every enterprise that makes for peace, for knowledge, for mutual help. We feel, too, that our duty to our children includes the teaching of them to be comrades one of another, not only at one and the same school, nor in school life only. We feel that it includes teaching them to reverence all human beings, even strangers, as brothers and sisters, that it includes helping and serving all men, that it includes willing the good of all men, that it includes loving to increase knowledge as a holy passion. We hold it includes tenderness to animals as fellow creatures, compassion to the lowest of men, the outcast, the worst criminals. We hold "our duty" includes giving all men opportunities to rise in their social status, in condemning no class to lifelong drudgery for a bare living, no class to ostracism by the well-born or the wealthy ; we hold our duty will not tolerate the tolera-

tion of any portion of one sex living by ministering to the vice of the other.

Now these things, we repeat, do not need a gospel. For they are beginning to touch the general consciousness of men. And were we as wise as we might be, we should, even in the old books, find some guidance on the wisdom the world needs in its new duties. There is enough to show us that the world is only a great family, a great state, and that it needs the wise warding of its wisest sons. Here and there one of its wise sons, great ruler in his day, felt the call of the larger duty, and drew wisdom from the writings of this creed or that.

But the search is difficult, and for the new world has become more and more difficult. For in the eyes of the old world, with the rarest exceptions, the need for the discharging of world-duties, as a part of its gospel, is not felt. The world as a whole was a great unknown, and only that part of it where the teacher lived was lit up for the men to whom he spoke. He was a voice in the little world where he lived, and

a living example in that little world, and to that corner was not given either the power or the wish to help, to ward, to guide the great alien, unknown whole.

Poor warders, poor way-showers, poor brothers' keepers are we yet for that matter. Nevertheless, we see now, as never before, that we have duties not to country only, not to race only, but to the world that is now, for our enlarged knowledge, a circumscribed, a determined whole. We feel the call, and as one not incumbent on rulers only, to help the world's distresses, to ward off from it aggressive war, oppression of the weak, savage persecution in the name of a creed, to be its teachers, its brothers, its lover.

And when we seek to strengthen and to guide these our new widened ideals by the wisdom in our old books, written when this knowledge and these impulses and aspirations were yet unborn, it is as if a soldier went into the battle of to-day with a halberd, as if we were to make the scientific experiments of to-day with the apparatus available last century, as if we played the Appassionata

Sonata on a spinet, or carved a statue with a gardener's tools. World-peace, world-light, world-helping, world-warding, world-way-showing, world-allotting, world-councils that shall meet in wise concord and sway the world, and in swaying bless the world—where in any scriptures shall we find, if not shining in high relief, at least in passing reference, words hereon to make us wise and strong? What help did we get from them—from any sacred books—about war? True, things we found about the ill that war is—for that matter have we not heard one woeful utterance ascribed to earth's most loving son, Jesus, as a sort of justification for the continuance of wars?—but nought as to how wisdom might prevent wars, the world being what it is and *how it now is*.

Do we not need such scriptures as can guide us wisely? Are they sufficient guides if, as to what are now the great and pressing problems of the new world, we search them almost in vain? In the day of their compiling, men's minds were for the most part too backward, too childish, and life too

limited for such teaching. Greater principles of conduct, greater social ideals belong to the greater world which is our heritage.

How shall we then draw inspiration and guidance from teachings that were delivered to the men and women of a small world as containing principles and ideals fitted for it alone? Do we mean to say that we need no further guidance, no greater gospel? We do not say so. We think that we do. We think we are so far from living up, as yet, to those principles and ideals that it seems sometimes as if nothing but a new, an even greater helper, of men can ever raise the world to lay hold of the life that may save it from an awful relapse. But if we are to be perpetually looking backward at the pictures we have in scriptures of past worlds with past creeds, we shall not, we cannot be pressing forward to welcome new light, we cannot be mothering amongst us the germ of that lovely child who may one day come to birth and, as a man wiser than ourselves, draw all men after him.

III

HOW TO FIND THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGER

WE have to ask ourselves where in the history of the earth, so far as we have surviving records of that history, has there been a message told to an elect messenger? We see documents in many tongues, purporting to give the very words, whenever they were converted into writing, of the churches which grew up after the messenger had come and gone, and which were the exponents of what they held to be his message. But in reading these, even if it be not in translations or re-translations, but in what claims to have been the original tongue of the expounding church, we are plunged into difficulties. For we seem to trace a difference between the note struck in the earliest appearance of the teaching messenger and

the taught message as compared with what seem like later, because more authorized, more stereotyped presentations of his teaching. And there is here and there a want of mutual accord. Other teachings cluster round the apparently original utterance. Contemplating at this end of the past, we can see now a message true and good always and for all men, now a doctrine pronounced concerning some needed reform in views and customs of a day and a country of the past. And the later the writings are betrayed to be, the farther do we find ourselves from accord with those earlier utterances.

If we really want the truth, and are not concerned to support any preconceptions of what is true, we are unhappy readers. Something akin to despair comes over us. Where in all these doctrines, where in all these set, and often sought phrases, is the word of that man who was impelled, whether by some mysterious urge from without, or by an equally mysterious inward urge of love for his fellows, to go about, day after

day, talking to this man and that woman for their good, who was a brother to all, who spent himself in their service, who it may have been laid down his life for them? We are at a loss for a clue in all this smother. We are in a jungle with no path or compass. We are at a parting of the ways with no signpost. We have lost sight of the helper who was a friend and comrade to his generation, but who reappears as a god or a superman to the worshipping later generations, who compiled the documents, but for whom he was not even a remembered experience.

But we do not utterly lose heart. There comes a day when we say, we will see if we cannot trace the very message—if he really had a very message—in a teaching which had not ever before appeared as a saving truth, as a gospel. We look, in the message thus considered, for a new note, a note which may prove to have been uttered or felt after by the wise few, but which had never yet been proclaimed to the multitude with fearlessness of the consequences. We see

that the new note is not repeated as new, as gospel, in the words of other later helpers worshipped of men. We may find it in their teaching, but no longer as a central theme. It has become part of a teaching which takes that note once new for granted, to what extent the teaching has become wrought up into the general consciousness of the relatively civilized realms of the earth.

This gives us, at any rate, a clue by which to work, and puts new heart into us. And we try now to get at this and that new note under all the superstructure that the church of each gospel has piled upon it. Hope springs up that we may be on the right track, and the promise in this hope we seek to make good. It is not an easy task even then. We are not deeming we have gone far in these pages to making good. But we have tried to suggest a way by which others may make better our making good. With us is rather the will to help than the skill or the learning or the lore. To one line only in so vast a field have we for many

years limited ourselves—a field that most badly needed workers. Till we applied the clue in that field we got no light, for all our long labours, on the real message in the movement called Buddhism. Then light did seem to rise upon us. We seemed no longer up against a serried wall of church formulas. As to other creeds we cannot pretend to speak clearly, and we are a most diffident writer, if a happy trier.

That they whom in these pages we have called Helpers were, in their world and their time, peculiarly fitted both to feel some movement of spiritual growth felt after by their fellow-men and to give utterance to it in public and without fear, this we hold true. That they gave utterance to it as a message of utmost authority and inner conviction we hold true. That the message reached them as a revelation from without, that it was, even if they did not realize it, divinely inspired, sent from God, “who at sundry times and in divers manners spake by the prophets,” this we believe. We cannot always point to the agent or agency

who inspired. Muhammad was moved by a voice, Jesus by the man who baptized him and made him his disciple, Gotama by a deva—a man from another world—moved, that is, to begin to teach. Zarathustra may have been similarly moved, but the testimony has perished. Much would we give for worthy records of how the message came to each and all. It is wonderful that the church in every case has not treasured the record of so wondrous an event. But we can see that the message was something that drew men to the messenger, as little children to their mother; not indeed all who heard, but such as were feeling the need of the teaching he revealed. And we see that the teaching, in a more or less distorted form, was adopted in the years that followed as something good and necessary for the weal of the world, as something which, if rejected, made for evil here or hereafter or both.

We are not so foolish as to say that men have never been helpers of men save in this way. Nor as to say that men have never helped their fellows, not as nations, tribes

or individuals in any other way. Men, and women too, have helped their own country, have helped them of their own race and tongue as patriots, as poets, as statesmen, as teachers, as healers, and in yet other ways. And the peace and order, the ideals and the health, the morals and the knowledge of those of other races and tongues as well have been helped by the work they have wrought. All these have been Helpers; all have been to some extent Saviours; they have worked for good; they have been helped by God.

But the helpers whom we have also called messengers were helpers in a special way. They were helpers in virtue of the message revealed to them. And this message brought to the mind of man, when confronting what we now call religion, a new light to stimulate his spiritual growth. There was a day when it did not belong to religion to worship a "good" God by a "good" life. When this came to be taught as religion, it was new to religion, to the religion of the people. The man who first taught it in one land at a certain time, the man who first taught it

in another land at another time, the one teaching the good life and the good God, the other teaching the good life without the good God, were both Helpers of men in this special way. Their doctrine was a novelty, and they often made themselves a nuisance in teaching it without fear or respect of men. Their age, their land had not discerned that the well-being of the land, let alone of the world, nay, that the welfare of each, was bound up with the being good. When Gotama taught: "As well might you call yonder bank of the river to come over to this side and bear you over, as call and call upon this god and that god and not live the good life, whereby you may be reborn among them!"¹ we, reading it, call it an impressive sermon. It was more. It was the thrust of the new theme into the very heart of the current religion. And he taught the good life to men and women of all stages of culture as now we teach children the catechism with the ten commandments. When Jesus taught men to love and serve

¹ *Dialogues of the Buddha* (London, 1899), i. p. 309 f.

one another, he called this a new commandment, a sign, a work the doing whereof would show whether men were with him or not.

We have lost the force of these themes as new melodies. We are born in a happier day, for we have inherited them not as a new diet ; we have absorbed them as very mother's milk. And we are hardly satisfied to take the good life as the very message of those two great Helpers of men. "Why," we say, "that's only teaching morality, at the best, holiness ! They must have taught something more on top of that." We forget the state of their world and its creeds when they went forth to help that and to reform these. We are not foolish if, on that account, we judge that religion still needs to teach the good life and the other themes once so new. We are only foolish if we say they are new, and are, in themselves, adequate to make religion complete in our day. We are foolish if we say we need a new Helper, a Second Advent, a new Avatar or Wisdom man to teach us these. They have been revealed. We need more.

IV

ZARATHUSTRA, HIS WORLD AND HIS MESSAGE

WHERE, amid the dead and dying creeds of the dim past, shall we look for a message that is divine ? Where, amid bygone sacrifice and vanished rites and buried priesthods, shall we find those who first brought those messages to help each his corner of the earth ?

In the ancient civilization of Egypt, some thirteen centuries it is said before our era, we come upon an effort to transcend the worship of the many gods of things visible and material, and to see in all the work of one almighty being. This was a very notable message. But to whom was it given as a revelation ? Not surely to the well-meaning but foolish youth, King Amen-hotep IV, who so materialized the message as

virtually to see that one spiritual God in the sun's disc (Aten), and who was so unwise a shepherd of his people. Kings are no fit messengers of the divine word. A messenger, a true helper there will have been, but his name has perished in that evanescent dawn. He, too, doubtless perished in the swift revulsion of the nation and its return to Amen and his priests and fellow-deities. Aken-aten, as he renamed himself, may well have been a pupil of that faithful messenger, and with autocratic vanity have absorbed the personality of the teacher into himself in the hymns he has left. So also, elsewhere and elsewhen, did Emperor Asoka, in whose edicts the real messenger of the faith he adopted is hardly mentioned. In Aken-aten's monotheism we can trace the glimmer of a true message, but the true helper's name has been lost, and the teaching has been twisted childishly into a form of nature-worship.

And something of this may be true of the dim but more persistent cult of Osiris.

It is long after that early glimmer in

Aken-aten's day that we come upon a similar message, but with a new note in it. This was when Moses of the Hebrews went up into the Mount of Sinai, and there, "seeing no similitude, but hearing a voice,"¹ had revealed to him a code prescribing the worship of one God and of six rules by which men could lead the good life as he could understand it. That the one God could not be served save in so far as these rules were obeyed was a new note in a people's gospel. That the disobeying of them was "sin," no less than the worshipping with other rites of other gods, or the worshipping with other than the prescribed rites—this was a message to the crude moral consciousness of the tribes of Israel.

It was no fit conception, for a more adult moral consciousness of the one and all-sufficing Deity. The Yahveh of the Pentateuch is conceived as a very fearsome spirit, half-materialized, prompt to flame up in jealous wrath, and swift to command the slaughter of man, woman, child and beast when he had been displeased. Yet there

¹ Deut. iv. 12, 15.

are shown in the records gropings after a nobler ideal of a God who loved these people and desired their good, who was their protector, upholding with the everlasting arms, the father of all who trusted in him, who heard their prayers if with all their hearts they truly sought him.

As the centuries rolled on, the vision of the one God grew purer and nobler in the recorded writings of the Jewish prophets, as did also the view of the good life. God, the Holy One, loving mercy rather than sacrifice, nay, abominating burnt offerings, waited that he might be gracious ¹ and reveal himself to those who followed on to know him.² In this way was the little world of Israel prepared to hear, as gospel, the new note of religion as loving service by man to brother man when it should be sounded.

The prophets themselves, though in this way most truly helpers of men, were seekers after God and good, rather than elect messengers of the new theme. They helped to direct men to look for one who should come, who should be as a star, as the word

¹ Isaiah xxx. 18.

² Hosea vi. 3.

of world-wisdom made flesh, as Immanuel, one little believed in, despised and rejected, Virgin-born, the Holy One. And so they waited on the Lord in their day and passed on as stars before the dawn, as torch-bearers in the night, from one messenger as it were to another, as criers in the desert: Prepare ye the way of the Lord! How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! We need them now once more to cry that the earth may listen and look.

It was thus that helpers of men, whether they were messengers of new truth, or seekers after a message, fostered spiritual growth in the little world of the Semites of the West, and through them to the greater world around. Do we find a similar growth in the conceptions of God and of good in any part of that Eastern world in whom we recognize Aryan kinship?

We say "growth," for we are not seeking an absolute beginning of the conceptions "God" and "good." We speak only just here of the religious childhood of the world, of the moral infancy of man. We are not

seeking a world that was wholly unmoral. It has never been so since man was in it. But there was a day—a day that still is in some regions—when the elder children of the world were scarcely awake to the idea that it was more than a mere tribal work to observe abstinences from certain deeds, words, thoughts reckoned as undesirable, or “bad.” By that we mean such as hindered him and them from being what he held desirable, or “good;” which hindered him and them from becoming men who it was a “better” thing to be than not to be.

We are here up against an ultimate. At least we are not content with that so-called ultimate into which good is often resolved. In other words, we cannot, without falsifying the notion, get beyond “good.” It is not the same as pleasure or happiness, though this counts with many as the real ultimate aim. It is a different scale of values. To be good, to be better is not a sense of something to be enjoyed or contemplated only as a consequence of actions. It is a sense of something you will become, or have come to be. To come to be, to become, *devenir*,

werden, is of the very essence of "good." Happiness, pleasure, is but a co-efficient of good as it is of much that is not good. It is like the shape, the perfume, the colour of the flower, while good is of the very growth of the plant. And this is because good is a term of spirit, happiness or pleasure a term of mind and body, the spirit's instruments. Mind, body grow from infancy to adulthood no less than spirit. Then body enters on decay, and to some extent mind also; much, if it be the body's servant, little, if it serve spirit first and body next. But growth of spirit is not so rounded off, nor need there be decay. Its beginning we may not yet know, nor its end. Good is the index of its growth. Good belongs not to the little present world of what is enjoyed. It belongs to the world of one who would become fit to enjoy. We enter on the world of the better when we seek to be good, to be worthy of happiness, to take our happiness in what is good. Good may be used indiscriminately for happiness or for what is pleasant, for words are mostly rough tools, half-specialized only. But when

it is sought to resolve the one into the other, then it behoves us to uphold the claim of spirit, and not suffer its values to be merged in those of mind or of body. "God is spirit." And "good" is of spirit.

And it is of the essence of spirit to change. If the change be good, it is growth, growth from worse to better, from the unworthy to the worthier, from the imperfect towards the perfect, from the sinful towards the holy, from the unwise towards wisdom. As spirit grows, its ideals grow. To be respectable, decent, worthy in the eyes of the majority, contents him no more. "Every heart," wrote Shelley, "contains perfection's germ." The germ is now budding, and the ideal of inward holiness no longer repels, but like vernal airs stimulates growth. The necessity of betterment lays hold of the spirit. The desolate cry of lonely Elijah, "Let me die, for I am no better than my fathers!" becomes, for him, "Let me perish in spirit, if I become no better than I myself have been, than I am!" And they who talk fatuously, as worldly folk will still talk, of the world as a nice place, and of people being better as they

are, of any change as being of necessity to something worse, seem to him as voices from a dead world, committing that sin against the Holy Spirit which might not be forgiven, as a babble from an inferno of the lost. As spirit grows, that which we now and here call God becomes the good, the holy, the perfect, the all-wise Spirit, and more and more each spirit recognizes its own relative unworth and imperfection, and worships with the heart of a child, and the spirit of Job enlightened: "Behold! . . . I will lay mine hand upon my mouth."

It took a long, long time to arrive at this. But a great upward heave took place in ancient Aryan Persia, when Zarathustra arose and taught, so that mankind could come to set verses by him, or compiled after his words by his church, over against the hymns of the Rig-Veda of ancient Aryan India, or of the ancient Aryans who took them to India.

For the cry of man yearning to become spiritually better to a God conceived as supremely good is not in the oldest Vedic hymns. There are calls for help against nature-foes, against human foes, against

poverty and earthly tribulations. That is all. There is never a consciousness of unworthiness over against the supreme worth. There is no sense of sin, no confession of falling short, no repentance. There is no way sought to the Better. There is no heaven of the Best and Perfect. There is much self-complacency in the strong limbs, the value of the fine human animal, in beauty and courage, in hardihood and valiancy, in successful fray and booty. Such humility as we find is that of one confronted with a more powerful foe, who may crush him, or be a kindly ally, a gracious over-lord. There is no wish to be better as distinct from being happier, more successful, wealthier, victorious. Wealth and women and heirs, fields and cattle are asked for, but never the contrite heart. And there is no lack of the priest and his rites and his fine words.

Justly to estimate the difference between the attitude of the Vedic cult and that of to-day, so far as it is represented by the cult of Christendom, we need to turn abruptly to the latter and watch its rites. There the Western Aryan prostrates himself on bended

knees at a throne where is centred a Being who is good, loving, wise, merciful and just, a Being whose is the care of all, in whom "all live and move and have their being" (this being very variously conceived), in whom lies the fate of all and each, whose unseen messengers bring help to men. Still are men's hearts and women's intent on the things they deem bring happiness, success, wealth, victory. Still is there no lack of self-complacency away from that "throne" and those rites. But when knees are bent before it, then is there in the cult itself no room for self-complacency. Then are all self-confessed miserable sinners, found wanting, and most unworthy. All wish by it to become better. Many make resolutions to be so. Many confess, not only in general formulas, but in personal self-revealing that they have done this and that sin. All deserve punishment. All rely on the worthiness of one to save them hereafter. Death is met in loneliness save for this faith. All are little lonely souls relying on the mercy of God.

For the compiler of the Vedic hymns

there lived no merciful God. There were but bright and terrible gods who might through the sweet savour of the sacrifice and the sweet sound of the ritual be very kind. The kindlier gods appear, but they are of a later date. Those invoked earliest are very aloof, very capricious, very callous as to this man and that. The woman did not count at all as a praying unit. The child was valued in the cult only as his father's successor. The weak, the old, the mentally or physically deformed are passed over, incumbrances of little value. No one was of importance save the young and the strong, the wealthy and the wealthy man's priest.

Let no one therefore say that there was no religion. There was religion, but it was that of the strong boy braggart, who cares little for the weak, small, stupid boys. Yet the words represent that braggart's earnest wish to stand well with his little world and to be respected by it, and by his bright, fierce gods.

But when we take up the oldest portion of the Avesta, the "Verses" or Gāthās, the scriptures of the creed of old Persia

associated with the name of Zarathustra (more usually Zoroaster), we see a man wrestling with a conception that is far different. Here the self-complacent note is lacking. He is aware that he is far from being "good" in thought, word or deed.¹ He is asking ever of a God, conceived as Good Mind, Good Word, Good Deed, that he may be filled with this goodness and be made pure. Only on that God, who is Best Thought, Holiest Spirit, can his soul count for help. Linking himself with Good Thought, with the fellowship "for which he strives," he can "rightly discern the religion that comes from Thee, O Ahūra ! and teach it to men." Very crude the wording of these old verses sounds to-day for the most part. And still there is much preoccupation with kine and crops and the doing down of this or that enemy. Yet are the prayers priest-free and alive, spiritual out-breathings, a wonderful advance in the road of religious utterance. That the "Verses" are so priest-free and so alive, so "speaking," that we can often seem

¹ *Hu-mata, hu-khta (hu-ukhta), hvarshita (hu-arshita)*. The *hu* becomes *su* in India, *eu* in Greek.

to hear the fervent voice uttering them, is, to some extent, good internal evidence to lay beside the relative antiquity of their language, and believe that they represent genuine sayings turned by early, and not late, compilers into metrical form.

Yet it should not be thought that we have in them the general voice of a people advanced in religious growth. Zarathustra was a genuine reformer with a fairly colossal task before him. No one had more need than he of these earnest humble calls to the Best Mind, to the spirit of right, wisdom, purity. He was born in a world of thinly civilized barbarians, of men, that is, who were able to live together mainly in peace, and with the wish to be just and honest and truthful, more or less. But not of men who were as brothers to brothers and sisters, who had any conception of the larger meaning of love, who were warders of the weak, the sick, the unfit; who saw in woman not an adjunct but a fellow unit, who saw in the child the making of a better generation, who saw in the priest a spiritual counsellor and friend.

Priests there were—where have they not been? but they were necromancers, butchers of living victims at the sacrifices, teachers of a world beset by demons. It does not follow that they were the most brutalized in the community. Many may well have hated to wield the knife, especially when the hour was near for the rotting away of faith in the efficacy of their ghastly duties. But behind them and their uplifted knife stood the Must-Be of the sacrifice, stood the Thou-Shalt of the ritual, stood the Fear and the Ignorance of the people.

So lonely was Zarathustra in fighting all this, so uphill and perilous his work, that his church handed down a myth that it took him ten years to win his first disciple. This is quite incredible. Not so badly does the Loving Will of the universe equip and time the messengers. It sends forth to help men help themselves. "Never man spake like this man" will have been no less true of Zarathustra than of his successors. No man ever brought new spiritual light to men who did not radiate a drawing influence and power that we vaguely call magnetic on those who

are waiting for him, especially when the revealed message is as a new-lit fire blazing within him. And there will have been many waiting for him, as a voice to utter "the thoughts they had not yet told," as a will to drag them out of the groove of outgrown ways, as a guide to set their feet in the new way. The day will come for each of us when we shall learn that, from the day of his first inspired utterance, Zarathustra found a man or men to stand by him and say: We are with you. But it may well have been ten years before he found his kingly backer, Vishtasp.

The myth may possibly have grown from the utter absence, in Zarathustra's teaching, of any place for a segregating of his followers. He was not singular in having the welfare of the people at heart, and a sincere, persistent urge to help them. But he had no plan for bringing anyone who stood by him out of "the world." Monasticism was not unknown in his world; but he had nothing to say for it. Not for his reformed souls the abnormal cloistered life. He did not even seek to form a distinct club, society, or fellowship such

as was started by Jesus. For him the world reformed meant simply the fellow-villager, the fellow-citizen of the good mind, the good word, the good deed, happy in pure living and able to face at death "the judges on the bridge." In a later day in India Gotama would fain have taught this, the "middle way" of the uncrippled, good life. But he made the initial mistake of beginning with an appeal to the ascetic mind, and later won an assured position only by prevailing, as ascetic, over ascetic societies. The prejudices of his little world were too strong for the simple sanity of his message.

Priesthood, it is true, was won over to Zoroastrianism and deluged it with formulas and meticulous rules and rites concerning much that did not matter, or with proceedings that are to us silly and tiresome. But for Zarathustra no body of men or women was, for the sake of spiritual growth, to be exempted from their duties as warders of the earth and their fellow-men. It is on behalf of "the kine"—the tillers, that is, of the fertile earth and the owners of the kine upon it—

that he prays the Good Mind to help. Earth was to be cherished and kept clean ; its cherishers should purify their lives. All the rest belonged to the dreadful world of the Lie.

Very simple was this gospel, yet to have attempted more would have been seed cast on a soil too unprepared. We have little men here and now in place of Zarathustras, and men who are much in error, yet are we farther than he. But we are not farther if we say there is nothing in his teaching for us. We have to be with him so far as he went, if we would go farther. He built that we might build higher. He taught, that we might be able to receive a greater teaching. Ours is not the little dark world of devils, of bloody sacrifices, of lovelessness in which he lived. Ours is a higher platform. Ours is a greater debt to humanity, a greater outlook of forward view. But that does not make Zarathustra little. He was a great man, and in him we are greater, through him we move to higher issues.

V

GOTAMA (*THE BUDDHA*)

I. THE MAN AND HIS MESSAGE.

It is not always easy to say where, in the old records, the man who seeks wholeheartedly to help his fellow-men may be truly found. But there are some scenes recorded that seem to be more truly recorded than others. And the reason is that he must himself have recorded them in the first instance. This would be no warrant for the truth of the event, if we were dealing with the life of an insincere man. It would, on the contrary, be less likely to be a real event. But we are going to speak about men who were incapable of deceiving their fellows, about men who sought not for praise from men, about men who were in deadly earnest to get at the truth and to tell the truth, whether it was likely to please

men, or redound to their own credit, or not.

And we have first to speak about the man Siddhattha of the Gotamas, who is more usually spoken of as the Buddha (that is, the Wake, the Enlightened, the Wise), or as just Gotama.¹ We shall speak of him as just Gotama. This will not please some for whom he is not just a man, but a very great superman, one out of all measure superior in wisdom and goodness and power to anyone else on earth. Such people prefer to speak of him as our blessed Lord, or as the Buddha, or the Bhāgāvā (Exalted, Blessed, Adorable). But for us he is and always was a very lovely, very human person, a man who when he was on earth was above all things a friend and a brother, and not a little god. We know he is not always so represented in the books. But then the books were the work of a much later date. And men's memory of the man had undergone a great change. We will go into that again later. We are now going to say where

¹ Pronounced Gô-tā-mā.

and why it is that we seem here and there to trace the real *man*.

The scene we have spoken of is that where Gotama, fresh and victorious from his struggle to beat out in his mind a way by which the sorrow and the sufferings, the ills, of mankind might be put an end to, hesitates to begin to tell mankind of that way. We think it is a true record, firstly, because he was alone, and must therefore have told it himself to others; secondly, because it shows him as a very man and not a superman. We can well understand a mere man hesitating. We can understand a wise man hesitating. But we cannot see a superman hesitating. He would no more have hesitated than did the baby Gotama in the apocryphal legend, who immediately after his birth took seven steps forward on his wee feet and, opening his tiny toothless mouth, proclaimed himself as the greatest being on earth. A superman is surely very strong to will and to act. Yet here we see Gotama shrinking from the task of carrying his scheme into effect. He cries out that it is too hard for the foolish, ignorant,

pleasure-loving, life-loving world to accept, or even to understand. He craves to be exempt from the toil and the rebuffs, the slights and the wounds that such a task involved.

Then, it is recorded, he had a visitor, a man from another world, who is called Great Brahma. This was no angel, this was no god, but one who had himself been once, nay, many times on earth a very man, but who was now, as being no longer of earth, visible only to those who were gifted with what is now called clairvoyance. And Gotama is repeatedly said to have had that gift as well as the gift of clairaudience, and the other psychic gift of thought-reading. The visitor was a wise man. He knew, as his world would know, how important for mankind was this crisis. He implored Gotama upon his knee, with clasped hands and robe draped for homage, to consider the state of the world. How that not all men were ignorant, foolish, pleasure-blinded; how that there would always be some, if only a few, who would listen and understand and be saved.

It was sound advice, for it is always worth while to help men, even if it be but a few.

The effect of the entreaty was to make Gotama consider, not so much his scheme, as men themselves, men as they really were, not all alike, but at every stage in the upward way, and varying in disposition, power and opportunity. We do not know whether he meditated long, but he recognized that there was a chance that he might be listened to, an opportunity that he might help. And from the time when the visitor departed, glad at heart because of the consent to teach, we do not again read of Gotama showing reluctance or doubt. But it does not follow that he never felt either, because it is not on record that he ever again betrayed such a state of mind. Weariness he not seldom betrayed, and now and then impatience, and at times when he seemed unable to help or convert, he gave the case up. Had he not so given way at times during his long career of help, we could only conclude that, from the moment his mind was made up to teach, he underwent a great change of

character. For the little scene reveals him as a man in many ways even as we are. And if he could so hesitate then, the reasonable inference is that, as the years went on, there were other hours when he was again in the valley of indecision, nay, of regret. He had left much, and there would be the thought of the home, of the wife, of the boy. But there would also be the thought of the men and the women, his disciples in the Order, his disciples in the world, whom he was keeping straight by his example and his teaching. To few has it been given to be so very much a guide-in-living to persons as was this man. He himself stood for so much that his gospel could not give them. He was bound to them for life, and theirs he remained till death.

We do not know whether Gotama had any very clear plan how to begin his mission. He seems to have wished to find out what other teachers would say of what he proposed to teach. Would they approve, would they sympathize, would they help? We read that he proposed to himself to go to the

two men who had successively taught him. It was revealed to him that they had lately died. He then turned to the five men who had, like himself and with him, sought to learn truth by austerities, or *tapas*. "Those earnest men who toiled with me and wondered while I all but died in wrestling for truth while keeping the body under—they might understand. They forsook me when I gave up ascetic practices, as one who had fallen back on a weaker habit of life. But they shall see that mind has won, that light has arisen on me. Good were it to hold my peace and live in peace. But should I live in peace lacking the esteem of men like these? I will seek them out and tell them."

The records tell of his meeting with a fakir as he goes, and of a little talk in which Gotama puts forward the same kind of extravagant claim that he is made to do as a new-born babe. It is a very unnatural and unlikely story for him to have told of himself. It is not so unnatural or unlikely that adoring compilers should have handed on, in embroidering, the story as originally told

either by the fakir or by himself. It uses many terms that can only have come into use after the teaching of Gotama's Order had become set and established in certain forms of speech.

There was no very great show of eagerness among the five friends to welcome Gotama when he came back to them. But he overcame their hesitation, for he had a way with him that men could not resist. And he forthwith uttered before them what is recorded as his first address. The substance of it was as follows :—

To live mastered by the body, or to live neglecting the body is equally wrong. There is a middle way, the way of the good life. The good life is to be one's best in thought and word, in will and deed.

We do not think it necessary to say more of the address as recorded. For all the rest is a formula, and formulas take time to come into being. They do not spring up ready-made at the outset of a teacher's career. We are not denying that Gotama may have said there and then that the way to

overcome the ills of life was to learn what it is that causes ills and to remove the cause. It is the way how to live—the so-called Eightfold Path—that remains as his really great contribution to the service, the life, the knowledge of mankind. It was not anyway in a stereotyped formula that he will have said it. What he said in effect was: Be good, be your best, and you will be happy. I am now happy. I would see you happy.

We think it well to emphasize this, for far too much stress has been laid upon the formulas in Gotama's teaching. They are quite accidental to his real message. They are not of its essence. They leave us very cold, because they do not come from the heart of the man to his brother men. They are not a little fusty from the effect of having been cloister-bred. They will not endure the light and the warmth of real life. Let us bury them!

We do not need to go into the why and wherefore of Gotama's reluctance. We have done so elsewhere. It is stated that he

felt men would not understand a gospel that offered no gods, no sacrificial rites, no priest to work between them and man, no hope of a final unending heaven of the good things of this world without this world's sufferings and death ever to follow. It is stated that he shrank from teaching them things so unattractive and so little understood as a view of a world where nothing happened by chance or by arbitrary will, and that the only sure and final way to end suffering was to find out and remove the cause of suffering, and that this was the will to live, the will to get, the will to have it all one's own way.

We are not at all prepared to accept this as true. We admit that it is a side of Gotama's teaching—if it really was his teaching—which will have made a strong appeal to that very great number of persons in India who had "gone forth," or left the world and entered on the "houseless," that is, the religious life. For them life had ceased to offer attractions. They had foregone all wordly aims and pleasures. At least this

was their professed ideal. It is they who would have rejected his gospel, had it not in some way appealed to them. They needed a gospel which had in it a message *for them*. They were walking along a road that led away from the joy in life as life. The goal they needed was not one likely to attract the men and women in the life of the world.

But the compiling of the books was undertaken solely by just these men of the houseless life. Is it to be wondered at that they are constantly found emphasizing the excellence of their own path, and putting on one side, in all but a very few writings, the path along which laymen needed to be led ?

It is possible that, when Gotama thought out his plan he too was thinking more with the mind of the man in religion—the *religieux*. But we are very certain that, after his first essays in teaching, when he turned to seek the average man of the world, and when the average man of the world came and sought him, he threw himself into the nature of their needs and into giving them the kind of help they most needed. For we learn

that he was consulted on very many and manifold questions. Here are some : How to be good so as to be happy both here and hereafter, how to win safety in death, how to seek to live so as to be in the way to the very good life, how to tell where so-and-so was now reborn ? Why do all creatures suffer pain ? How can we escape death ? Is all our present experience due to causes that arose in a former life ? Do you blame ascetic practices ? Why are you silent concerning some things we want to know about ? Do you approve of sacrifice ? What do you think as to the four classes of society ? What are my prospects of success in a war with the Vajjians ? Why is our population thinner now than formerly ? To what persons should one make gifts so as to get the best results ? What is the way by which we may attain hereafter to Brahma ? Are there gods or spirits ? Is there progress in religion ? Why are some women born ugly, some pretty ? Which is the highest of our senses ? Has the recluse a reward no less than a man of the world ? How is it some are made wholly

worthy here below, some not? Can you get people to heaven? Have you any one doctrine that can? Does every immoral person go to purgatory? Shall we two whose wedded life has been without a flaw meet hereafter? What can an old man, diseased in body, do? Is it true that there is a special heaven for the dramatic artist? for the soldier? for the trainer of horses, of elephants?

These questions and many others were put by persons of different ranks, in different places, some of them laymen, some of them in religious orders other than Gotama's, some of them recluses whom we may call free-lances, unattached, "wanderers." We will not stay to consider the several answers, for that alone would fill the volume. We will only say that we have here a case where the goal that is claimed as that of Gotama's gospel by the clerical compilers of the records could not possibly have sufficed to help one and all of these people. Even the compilers do not depict him as advising a frequent questioner, the King of Kosala, to do more

than mind his own business of kingship better, and lead a more abstemious life, and not be depressed because his wife had given birth to a daughter, not a son. We wish to show that Gotama needed to be all things to all men, or, more correctly, something to each man or woman. And he could not do this, if he had one and the same message for each and every person. He was called upon to give help that varied with the varied needs of the questioner. And so much is this recognized in later works, that the Suttas containing the questions and the discourses are contrasted with the analytic Abhidhamma books as being the "teaching according to men's wishes and dispositions."

2. HIS WORK.

Let us now see how, at the very outset of Gotama's career, his own first efforts to help the first comer brought with them the need to adapt his teaching to the particular case.

We read that, after he had spent a little time over the conversion and instruction of

the five men who had for long been his friends, he was sitting in the early morning in the wood where were their huts, and saw a young man walking by, a man of wealth, though not of his own noble rank. He was in great mental trouble, and Gotama called him and made him sit down beside him and be comforted, for the distress and the danger he feared were now passed away. The man was attracted, and Gotama taught him—what? The duties he owed to other men and to his own family, the duty of charity, the danger of self-indulgence, the way to happy rebirth—in a word, the moral life of a citizen of the world. It is only after the man has accepted with a docile heart this admonition that Gotama is stated to have taught him the doctrine of the cause of suffering and its removal, a doctrine which, we read, was fit for him because he was now certain not to go back to his house-life in the world.

It is impossible not to see here the work of the monastic editors. Yasa, they add, became an Arahant and was ordained to the

Order. And they have nothing thereafter to say about him. We are left wondering whether he really entered the Order. Tradition singled him out with two other cases as a man who obtained final assurance (became Arahant) "in all the circumstances of life in the laity."

But that is all. The fact that we do not hear more of him is a little curious when we consider that he was the first lay convert, and that his coming forth from a luxurious life was in some ways like that of Gotama himself, and further that he was the channel through whom the first influx of converts from the laity poured in. But this may be due only to his not developing any special gifts or activity. Here we are only concerned with just this—that he is first taught how to be a good man in the world, and then is forthwith instructed how to turn his back on most of the first lesson, namely on the wordly goods whereby alone he would exercise benevolent giving, and on the happy world awaiting hereafter the virtuous. The one thing both lessons had in common was the

moral life. And even here the domestic virtues enjoined in the former would be disregarded in the latter.

We have the story also of Yasa's anxious parents who had foolishly kept their son as irresponsible as an infant, and who together with the wife are made converts to the better way of living. *They* were taught only this—the first of the two teachings. Yasa disregarded his wife over his moral awakening no less than did Gotama. But she took a noble revenge in following him in reform. It was possibly a very new course at that time, but she had many successors, and Gotama's work among his fellow-men was made largely possible through the support of the wives and the mothers. His church had many hard things to say of women, as is the way of churches. But the women of his world were not so little-minded as not to walk in the way of a new life, when it had been shown them.

Meanwhile Gotama went to seek other fellow-men, and his first questioners came to him. They were not concerned with finding

the way to a better life. They were seeking to find the way to worse things, namely to a hired woman of pleasure who had carried off their property. The way in which they address him shows a later hand at work on a genuine old story. He is called "lord, the Exalted One," instead of the usual word to a stranger (*ambho*, or *bho*). "Has he seen a woman pass by in the wood?" "What have you, young sirs, to do with the woman?" They told him. "As to that, what think you, young sirs? Is it better for you to be seeking a woman, or to be seeking yourselves (literally: 'the self')?" They conceded, it was better to seek themselves (or the self). "Sit down, then, and I will teach you religion." As usual, his manner exercised a strong influence. Woman, lost goods were forgotten. They sat around the unknown monk and heard the talk about the good life. Stranger still, they also became suddenly fit for the second lesson, upsetting much of the first.

It is not easy for us to understand the force of Gotama's question to these young nobles. It would not move us now, or make

us come aside and listen. It must have meant more at that day. It was more on a line with the question: "Is it not better to seek to save your soul?" The word "self" did actually mean at that day what we mean by soul, and it meant more. It meant God. The word (*attan*, or *ātman*) meant both the soul in us and also the Soul of the world, creative indwelling Spirit. Spirit is the only English word that comes near it. The Christian scriptures say: "God is Spirit," and again, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful" . . . and again, "Cast thyself down" . . . and they use a different word in these sentences for spirit (*pneuma*), soul (*psyche*), and thyself (*seauton*). But in North India, when the Buddhist scriptures were composed, the same word (*attan*), used without pronoun, had to do duty in all such sentences. Hence, it was a very pregnant sentence to say: "Seek Self."

We find this is brought out in the second address recorded as delivered by Gotama to his first five converts. It runs as follows: Body is not self. It is very weak, often ill.

It cannot say: "I want to be so, and not so." Nor is mind self, whether we feel or think or will. It cannot change us from being weak, or stupid to being strong, or clever. We are not it, that is, body or mind.

This address is nowhere repeated in the same words.¹ As we give it, it has every appearance of being a genuine saying. But the formulas have crept into and laid hold of it, and made it far less the simple human wisdom than it was at first. There is a clumsy sub-division of mind about which it is difficult to get any agreement, either among old writers or new. And there is a funny little formula borrowed probably from another school of thought in later times, the formula: "This is mine. I am this. This is the self of me." This was taken over by the Buddhist church usually in a negative form, and runs, often repeated, through some of the scriptures. It is a very feeble tag appended here to a very impressive saying. No one looking at the address with an unprejudiced mind will

¹ It occurs once as dialogue (*Majjhima*, i. 231 f.) with a forceful elaboration of the simpler words of the address.

think it likely that a man bringing a fresh message that had welled up in his mind to his fellows could have said what was in his mind in a string of set phrases, that have the air of coming from a stock of learning, but do not appear in any such stock till a later date.

We cannot pursue this matter further here. It is a little curious, it is not a little disappointing that no true, living record has been preserved of what Gotama taught those young men concerning the finding of the self. It would have been one of the most precious and important heirlooms of the Buddhist church. It is a very mechanical editing, which has just thrown in verbally the same account as that given of the teaching to Yasa and Yasa's folk. The case called for a different way of applying his teaching, and he was not the man to slur over this.

It may be that Gotama shot an arrow at a venture in his counter-question, to hit the young men's attention by a religious catch-word in vogue at the time. Or it may well be that, at this time, *he was wavering* whether

he should, or should not, in his teaching, meet the religious inquiries of his day on their own ground. Should he make the central point of his teaching a knowledge of our real selves, who *are* neither body nor mind, but who are that which works by both, expresses itself through both? It may be he had not then settled to take a purely negative attitude on this matter.

It may be he had not realized that *no negative attitude can feed the world's need at all times, in all places.*

But that the question he put to the seekers is an editorial invention is very unlikely. By its very unexpectedness, yes, and by its unlikeness to any of his later recorded sayings, it was treasured in the memory and by the testimony of these very converts, since he appears to have been alone when they found him.

At this early stage in his career there appears Māra. Just as it was in a later age, so also in Gotama's day, the man or the woman whose influence, whose presence,

whose words were recognized, either at the time or afterwards to be evil, was sometimes assumed to have been not a human person, but a devil. And it is clear that Gotama from the first and to the end of his earth-life accepted the current belief in Māra. He may have adopted this Māra belief to give his teaching a hold on popular imagination. He may have known no better than to believe in such a personified power of evil. But his church gathered together the legends of his resisting and rebuking such a person. And references to Māra's seducings and quests in order to seduce are scattered throughout many of his recorded discourses.

Māra appears in his discourses as the thwarter of his work in two ways: As the jailer of men who needed to be free, and as the "ender" of men's upward way, the end whereof was not in sight. So he is represented at the earliest mention, that is, when Gotama was planning, with only sixty followers, his first missionary scheme, and again when the first little tour was over and they were declaring its results to him. We can well

imagine that there were persons who discouraged, who sneered on both occasions.

That Gotama should have sent forth his first disciples on a missionizing tour, to teach and to help as his fellow-workers, is one of the most remarkable acts of his life. It was a pure work of love, for he had nothing to offer men to tempt them to listen and to join him. He enjoined his missionizers simply to teach the good life. He called it the God-life—Brahmachariya. The word had ceased to mean all that it might mean. It was used for the time spent in learning under a teacher. It was sometimes used to mean a celibate life. And so its true meaning had got degraded. It must, however, have gained in depth of meaning by the use Gotama made of it. There can never be any term so fit to describe the really good life as the God-life, or divine life. The Buddhist schoolmen said in later years that "*brahma*" meant just "best," or "like the Brahma devas." They had lost that sense of things divine when they learnt to deny the Attā. They were in plain words

the little atheists of the world. But we are inclined to think that, for Gotama, the word held a sense of things divine. It was not just moral habits that he was out to teach. It was to make men holy. It was to make them better than just good. It was to make them be their best. It was to teach them the "eightfold path" of "*samma*" ("*summa*," or *supreme*) righteousness. It was to teach this that he sent forth his new brethren. And we read not a word of their being told to tell men that "we have no soul," or that the best life was to cast out all desire to live, and to give up all effort to make not themselves only, but the world happier.

3. HIS VICTORY AND THE PRICE OF IT.

We are now going to glance at the way in which Gotama won a foremost place among the religious teachers of his world, and how he won a king's favour and the firm establishment of what we should now call a church.

There were three brothers of the brahmin clan of the Kassapas who had been driven by the ambition to be famed among their

fellows as "holy" men (Arahants, literally, "worthy"). One at least of the three had supernormal will power. It was a prominent feature in that day of the holy man. It meant that he had hypnotic power over man and beast. It also meant often that he was what we now call clairvoyant and clairaudient. It means that he could read the thoughts of others, and could call up mental images that seemed real and alive. It meant other things as well.

Gotama also possessed these gifts, though we are not told at what stage of his life he developed them.

It was a very difficult thing in India for a man to get any influence as a teacher having authority unless he could show that he possessed one or all of these powers. People would come to Gotama asking him to work a wonder for them. It was not the way of the better life, and Gotama used to say so. The question he had to put to himself was : "Can I make men listen to me and lead the better life, without first showing them that I am as powerful as the most powerful

‘holy man’ they go to? Shall I show him that I can beat him at his own game? ”

It was a crisis in his career. And though the powers of good were on his side, so that he would have prevailed in the long run without such a contest, he nevertheless made the lower choice and engaged in a sort of competition with Kassapa of Uruvelā. It is not very edifying reading, but Gotama won and Kassapa worshipped and declared himself as a disciple. The fame of this brought in the other two brothers, and the followers of all three. And then it was that King Bimbisāra of Magadha came to wait upon the new sage, and to make him the gift of a grove and permanent headquarters.

When we consider the cost to Gotama of this contest with men like Kassapa, who was in no way really holy, we are inclined to think it was a heavy one. There was much to be gained by it; there was more to be lost. We cannot be quite sure whether the precedent he created of working feats of will-power in a way that dazzled ordinary men did not infect the whole tone of his Order. We read

of men like Great Moggallāna, one of his two chief disciples, frequently displaying such powers in a very extraordinary way. And we read that he was very complacent about it, and that other leading disciples praised him for it. We read that Gotama himself sometimes on subsequent occasions practised such powers. He did so, it is true, for the purpose of rendering help and service, and herein lies full justification, nay, he was bound, devoted as his life was to serve, to help by all the gifts he naturally possessed. But his disciples did not always exercise such gifts to so good a purpose. And he had on occasions to administer heavy rebukes and to express disgust with the very powers that he himself occasionally exercised.

When we consider how it is no little merit for Gotama to have lifted the meaning of the word Arahant to an altogether higher level, to the level of real holiness, of saintliness so far as there can be saintliness with no revelation of divinity, we cannot exculpate him from a certain want of wisdom in descending into the arena to tame these

lions with a violence similar to their own. To use a whip for claws, a heated bar for fangs may have been the only way. It was certainly for the moment an effectual way. But it was not the way for a Helper of men, if he and his gospel were to be the final hope of the world. It showed the teacher as a man not holy, as no better, save in degree of will-power, than his disciples-to-be. It showed the great man as little, the loving man as in a way brutal, a rival in violence. He was a lofty advocate of real holiness, yet, if these records are truthful, he showed little holiness in the way he took to win the right to teach it to others.

4. HIS WAY AND THE RECORDS.

We now come to the way in which Gotama tried to save others. It was not the way of an academical teacher. It was a very simple way. It lay in his trying to get at the nature of the individual. It lay in his recognizing the infinite variety of men's dispositions, the great difference in all that had gone to make them what they, each of them, were

when they met him. It lay in his feeling after the real need in each man's heart, which was not always the need he expressed. It would take too long to bring forward proofs of this method. Every time a book of the old records is translated, the truth of this can be ascertained by the general reader, especially if he reads between the lines. We ask him, till all are translated, to take this to some extent on trust. We know. We can say this, that whenever Gotama is consulted about any matter, we see him going past the more superficial answer to the root of the matter.

Sometimes the root of the matter lay very near the surface. It needed no deep probing. Sometimes it lay quite out of sight, and then we see him going down to it. We will give only one instance.

Gotama was once asked by a very old sick man what the likes of him could do? Would the master teach him something for his good and his happiness? The reply as recorded was brief, but it was one of sympathy, it was wise and it probed deep. "True,

true, housefather. You are old and you are very sick. It is much for you to feel even a moment of health. Try to train yourself thus : Ill my body is, but my mind is free from illness. Yes, housefather, train yourself thus."

It was a typical reply.

We will look at some answers which are recorded much more fully. We are not going into them, for it would take too long. But we see that, in practically all of them, the original advice is plastered over with set phrases, with formulas that no teacher on earth, were he never so sympathetic or so wise, could ever hope to make a living and deep impression withal. Here we will again give an example.

Gotama had a cousin, a noble of the Sakyas, Mahānāma by name. He was a close friend and admirer of his great kinsman, and several conversations between them are recorded. One of these runs as follows : The wet season was nearly over, and Gotama was being supplied, at the hands of tailoring brethren, with new, or repaired robes before going again on tour. Mahānāma came to

see if this were true, and if so, to be advised how he should best live in the absence of the dear and honoured counsellor. The reply, as recorded, commends him for seeking such advice, and then, at great length, recommends him to practise meditating on what came to be formulated and known as the "six recollections." He was to think in certain set phrases on "the Buddha," "the Dhamma," "the Order," on the "Moral Rules," on "giving liberally," and on "the inhabitants of other worlds."

If there had been present to advise Mahānāma no one like Gotama, of quick sympathy and deep sagacity and power of spontaneous utterance, we could imagine it possible for him to have been advised in formulas. Even then it was not very probable that any good teacher of the Order would have so admonished him. But with a Gotama present, the answer as stated is unthinkable. It is as if we were to read of Jesus admonishing "the lawyer" or "the centurion" in the terms of the Athanasian Creed. Can we not imagine a truer picture of Mahānāma

asking and Gotama answering in some such words as these:—

Mahānāma is afterwards relating: “He helped me so! He was one day going away. He was to be away for some time, and I was not sure how best to keep wise in his absence, for he was as a father to me, and I was often by him and talking with him. He would let me just hold his hand, and new life seemed to pour into me. He told me: You will know what to do. Be very little with the world. Be often alone. Be in the way of thinking things out. Be in the way of helping others. Be in the way of helping me. You can do that by willing me well. Be a loving man, a pure man, a truthful man.”

We can imagine Mahānāma's dismay—we will not speak of Gotama's opinion!—if he read of the stilted formulas by which he was to keep straight. Surely he would say: “That is not like him a bit! He was so human, so natural, so friendly, so very loving, so very full of life. It is horrid that the world should be taught: this was

Gotama's way. It is not that the words in their proper place are wrong, but they are not the words he said."

Another of the conversations with Mahānāma deserves to be shown up for similar reasons. Mahānāma was developing symptoms that made him think his end was near. He was fearful of death and of his fate after death, and told Gotama so. Two Suttas record the answer. The only point in which they agree is the reassuring words of the opening sentence : " Fear not, Mahānāma, fear not ! Your dying will be free from evil. Your hour when it comes will not be evil." Then in the one : his virtuous life is to ensure promotion to him hereafter ; it is only the body that will perish. In the other : he is given four formulas to bear in mind, and they are the first four of those six referred to above !

" We can remember that too," we can hear Mahānāma saying. " He was old and so was I. I said : ' I am in fear that I may be born unhappily.' He said : ' Fear not, cousin, fear not ! You will not be born

unhappily. You have been good. You will live in a bright happy world. You are in the light. You are in the truth. It is a good thing that death will be to you, for it will come as sleep comes. You will not suffer. You will wake before you sleep. You have a little trouble when you first fall ill ; then you are at peace ; it is a painless end.' ” No, the Suttas give bad versions. We did not talk at that time of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha. That was a much later formula. We never heard Gotama talk about himself as Buddha. He was not a very humble man, but he never was conceited. And it would have been a very high thing to say : “ Do not fear death by thinking about me, for I am your World-Saviour.” He never talked like that. He was too wise to say : “ I am this and that. I can do this and that.” He was a great man, but he was greater than to say : “ I am a great man.”

No, the answers were assuredly human no less than the questions. Where the answers are stilted and stiff and unnatural, it is the later hand at work on them, because

the first things had been forgotten, and men had come to think—as men will—that he was not just a man, and that he would have said things a man would not say.

By all professing Buddhists, nay, and by some not of their fold, Gotama is called, has for ages been called *sabb'aññu*, the all-knowing. Claim to know all has ever been made for him, and, as we have seen, the earlier records put such a claim into his own mouth. How far were the recorders competent to judge omniscience? Were they really more competent judges than that little woman of little Samaria, in the time to come? ¹ Gotama was wiser than his fellows. Clearly he was that. It was the wisdom that flowed from him in his homely teaching, in his sagacious replies, and in his earnest efforts to enlighten, that were a real source of help to his contemporaries and so a little word of God. He was, if not an omniscient superman, divinely wise in this, that the needs of men called forth in him an instant wish to help, a very unfaltering pursuit of

¹ "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did."

doing good, a very heaven of brotherly good-will. This, and no genuine well-attested superknowledge, was the justification of that fame which became his when men had long forgotten what he really said, and had failed to set down, truly or at all, the arguments by which he led up to and defended his ideas. We have only to look at many of the Suttas to see this. He is shown converting men by a few stilted words buttressed by a formula that could not possibly, as set down, have been effective.¹

As a warrior prince of his day he was but a little figure, but as an intellectual teacher he outstripped the warrior intellects of his day. As a learned man he had no standing, but as a genuine lover of truth he left great pundits far behind. As a world-knower he revealed no pre-eminence, but he found his way to the source of the main wants of his world. As a world-guardian he was limited in vision, but he saw the things about him that needed fostering: the feeble morality,

¹ Cf. e.g. *Kindred Sayings*, ii. p. viii. (London, Pali Text Society, 1922.)

the little good-will of man for man, the shallow wisdom, the stunted zeal, the fancy-ridden and muddled horizons of life.

We are not saying his knowledge and wisdom suffice to lead our world. We say they do not. Many, who have in these days come to know something of the teachings ascribed to him, will have found it an all but barren quest to find in them guidance to meet the problems of the great war. There was no great war in Gotama's little world. The frays between Kosala and Magadha cut but a small figure in the Suttas, and call forth but curt comment on the theme "war begets war." It was a great age with great opportunities, chief of which was the comparative hush of incessant warfare. Over a great portion of the earth the moral consciousness of mankind was awakening. The right and not only the profitable, the ought to be and not only that which is, the might be done and not only the customary, was dawning in the mind of men. And this is true whether men place Gotama's activity in the early part of the sixth century B.C.

or in the later. Had he been indeed omniscient, it was a world that would have moved him strongly, and a time that would have urged him to speak of it to those of his hearers who were cultured, who were in high positions.

We find him silent as to it all. We find him world-dumb. He whose counsels bore so strongly on the world of things as we find them, had no message for his fellow-men of the greater world beyond India, nay, of India itself as such, that lay waiting to be known and to be taught and to be helped. No word of the great moral awakening to the north through Zarathustra's mission in Persia. No word of the awakening in the Far East that would come to express itself in the teaching of Confucius and Lao-Tze. No word of the little people of the wonderful Helper to come, torn in two, and one portion taken captive by the Assyrian, yet destined to so notable a future. No word of the nucleus of the West, where the school of Miletus was witnessing earnest and unshackled efforts to seek out the moving

principles of the universe. No word concerning the little land of Attica, where somewhere about that time Solon was showing his world that for the ruler the good life is to be the father and protector of all, even the weakest of his subjects. No word concerning the barbarians further West and its mighty destiny. No word of the lands beyond the great seas. Would a really omniscient man have left no testimony at all that the earth on which he lived had so many messages for those of its children whom he was teaching?

On other worlds he was not silent, and however he came by such knowledge as he claimed concerning them (or as is claimed for him), this was a good thing. He opened up the hazy consciousness revealed in earlier Indian scriptures. He showed rebirth not as a fitful "to be or not to be," to be got by prayers to the fathers or the gods, but as a law of the world's life. It was the very voice of the future calling to men to live not for one world only, not for one life only, very deaf though they be yet. But as to

that *lōka*, that earth-world that bore him and learned from him, Gotama revealed no knowledge passing that of the little corner in which he lived and moved, no vision not shared by the men of his time.

The Buddhist mind has accepted too complacently this tradition of the omniscience of Gotama. It has asked itself too little whether an all-knower would have done and not done as he is recorded to have done and not done. Nor has the mind of anyone on earth a standard of an omniscient man who has ever lived among us, with whom we could compare him. We have sought in vain for any revelation in him of an all-knower's world-vision and -prevision. If we come to the little world of the flock he left behind at his passing, we are no less struck by his want of provision, if not of prevision.

In his loving shepherding, in his moral guardianship of his followers, he was a tower of strength to them. But in just this he was the very reverse of a superman. He was never dominating them by his leadership. He threw them back time after time upon themselves. He referred them to what they

had learnt as adequate for their self-guidance. This was so from the beginning. When his first lay convert asked for ordination, he is said to have replied: "The truth has been well declared to you. Live the good life whereby sorrow may best be ended." And he would say from time to time: "I have opened up to you the sure way, the welcome way that leads to joy. I have shut off the wrong way. Whatever a teacher can do for the good of disciples, out of love for them, that have I done for you. Here are shady seats. Here are lonely places. Meditate, brethren, be not lazy, lest ye come to regret. . . ."

Here was greatness, but it was the greatness of the good teacher, not of the superman.

Before he left his little world he would bid them cultivate self-dependence: "Be ye your own refuges, be ye islands"—or it may equally be translated lamps¹—"unto yourselves." He bade them also look to the Doctrine—his Dhamma—as their refuge, as their island or lamp. He did not add:

¹ *Dīpa* means both "island" and "lamp." The commentary gives the traditional meaning as the former.

Look to me, to your memory of me, your idea of me, as your refuge. He was in a way the very author of this Dhamma, though he made no claim to be so. He said: "I do but revive it. I do but show the way to it." So self-abnegating a leader was he to his church—he whom we have seen at the outset going beyond his mission to impose his power on others. He had shown them a path that was but what each had latent in him; the path of being one's best in word, thought and deed. He had not said: I am your way, your truth, your life. Ye cannot be saved except by me.

Yet what clerical order, what laity could so truly have said of him "I need thy presence every passing hour" as this community? They were not equal to the life he left them to lead. They proved unable to hold together. They split into some eighteen schools or sects. The branches came to speak of the trunk as the Low Vehicle. And reunion is no more to be looked for than it is in Christendom. They could not even judge special cases of monkish discipline without referring to him to decide.

Never has a church so needed superhuman mothering as the church of Gotama. He left it no Father to pray to, no Comforter to inspire, no Mother to intercede, no angels to watch over either parents or children. It was a very orphaned world that he left, and to have left them so reveals him as a very man of his time, and not in any way omniscient. A superman would have bidden the Moggallānas among them call on him for help. A world-seer would have revealed their near future, their coming dangers and difficulties. A foreseeing leader would have seen to it that, however little used for such things writing yet was, one or more recorders, trained either to write or memorize, should have taken note of his special utterances from the beginning. And foreseeing the day of his passing as he is said to have done, he would have appointed a successor and have arranged with him what sayings were to be held as central and authoritative, and how best they should be guarded and transmitted intact.

He did nothing of all this.¹ He left it all to

¹ Cf. *Kindred Sayings*, ii. xiii.

those whom he knew to be his inferiors. And so it comes that to-day we have to seek out his real message amid monastic doctrines put forward as central, not by him, but by his church.

Not that he was without prevision. He did foretell, so it is said, that the deeper teaching would be neglected for a " manifold of words "; that his church (*sāsana*) would last not even a thousand years, but only five hundred years, because he had been persuaded to let women take orders. But the predictions are too monkishly worded for us to take them very literally. It is possible that here again, in the matter of the women Sisters, Gotama had been wavering. He is made to look upon the concession as a move making for danger and for quicker downfall. And he gave way ungraciously. We are not resenting his attitude to women. It was better than that of the majority in his day. It was an advance. But his way over it was not that of a very wise man wisely decreeing. Herein, too, he showed himself not fit for worship, not more than a teacher of his day, to be loved, to be listened to, to be learnt from.

To see him so far more than this, to ascribe to him wisdom transcendent and knowledge universal, is to consign him to the dreadful doom of standing for a great lie. It is to see in him not a true friend of man, but a false god. It is to be the worshipper of his church, not the lover of his churches' founder.

There is a saying that to his body-servant no man is a hero. This is because the wisdom and goodness of a man rarely bears close inspection. Partly, too, perhaps, the judgment of the servant is a poor thing. Gotama, for the last twenty-five years of his earth-life, had a most faithful and worthy, if not altogether wise, body-servant. And touching verses, a simple unforced utterance, bewailing his passing, stand on record as composed by this man Ānanda. These lines are chiefly noteworthy for the idea they leave with us of what the loss of the beloved master meant to him. Here was a master whose purity and wisdom no personal attendant of worthy character could call in question. And if that wisdom had been supernormally deep, because of the presence

of infinite knowledge and power and saintliness, we should look to see, in the threnody, some tribute to all this. For this body-servant was no low-born man, but a noble and the first cousin of the master. He would have been capable of discerning something of the gulf separating the chief from the rest of his inner, let alone his outer, world. Yet what this devoted kinsman misses in the vanished beloved is just the friend and comrade :—

Gone is the noble friend ¹ we love
 And dark are earth and heaven above.
 And is the comrade ² passed away?
 And is the teacher gone from hence?
 No better friend is left, methinks,
 Than to mount guard o'er deed and sense.
 They of the older time are gone.
 The new men suit me not at all.
 Alone to-day this child doth brood,
 Like nesting bird when rain doth fall.

* * * * *

But I am one who yet has work to do,
 A learner with a mind not yet matured.
 And now the teacher hence hath passed away,
 Who e'er to me such sweet affection showed.³

¹ *Kalyāṇa-mitto*.

² *Sahāyo*.

³ *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, ii, p. 356. London, 1913.

Do we not see, in these artless lines, more than in the vast majority of the discourses, the all but lost Gotama, the wise, loving very human friend and comrade, the very brother of this man and that, the elder brother of this sincere, humble and loyal soul?

It is a wonderful thing that the records have not done more to stifle the love of Gotama. But this is because the memory of him is not really the work of the books. He lives in many hearts, but it is rather in spite of the records than because of them. For few Buddhists know the whole of their Canon as the Christian Protestant knows his Bible. If they did, they would see how attenuated, how formula-ridden is the image and speech of the person they adore. He has lived down the ages as a precious and wonderful memory, clothed and decorated with all manner of wrong notions, yet not so utterly transformed that we cannot see, peeping out, the lovely wise and loving man devoted to the service of men. The love, the light, the life he shed about him lives on in spite of the poor, stiff word-cases encrusting

it all. His influence lived on as a guide to life in spite of the dreary monastic ideal associated with his teaching, and taught as such in the Order for centuries. With the eye of faith and imagination—or did we dream it?—we see a congregation in North India, say at Nālandā, at about the time when Chinese pilgrims were passing through and recording what they saw.

A brother, friar, “bhikshu” is preaching a sermon in an open hall of the university. He is teaching laymen and lay-women good conduct in daily life. He speaks of the “Exalted One” as if he were still on earth, as if he still divined what each one desired and could or could not do. He ceases, but invites questions. One, not of the common sort, asks him, as centuries ago it had been asked: “Is there any way by which we may escape death?” The monk replies: “There is a way by which a man may escape death. It is to cease being born again. There is no other way.” The questioner goes on: “How are we to escape being born again?” “The Exalted One has said: Only by the ceasing of craving can we escape that.”

The questioner pursues: "How may we make craving to cease?" "By just ceasing to crave. The Exalted One has said: If we cease to crave we can bring rebirth to an end." The man is pertinacious: "How may we learn not to crave?" "By ceasing to set our affections on anything." The man is merciless: "Would you cease to set your affections on the Exalted One?" The monk is silent, then turns to the seated Buddha image in the shrine and with hands uplifted and saluting repeats: "I adore that Exalted One, Arahant, Buddha supreme!" His voice quivers with emotion. He tries to speak further and cannot. The questioner too is silent. Here is something true and heartfelt in place of dogma and of words. And there steals into his mind the truth unspoken, felt after, that if only love be set on the highest that we know, a way of escape from death may be found.

One day we may come to know the true Gotama as now we cannot, come to know how his teaching was for "thee" and "me," and not by formulas. He had the welfare of each man at heart—man, woman and

child. He was not fitted to be a teacher of the whole truth, nor of the truth that was the need of another world at another time, still less of truth that is the need of all the world at all times. He saw but a little way before him. He had but a slender vision of true things. He knew some deep truths. He knew naught of "Alpha" or of "Omega." He had no vision of God. But he had a vision of what was good for men. He knew that man to be happy must be good. He was a teacher of the good life. Men needed that teaching. They need it now, but they needed it much more then, for it had not been taught as now it has been taught. It was the gospel that man needed. It was the gospel for the time, and for a corner of the world able then to receive it. It is not the gospel man needs now, as gospel.

Gotama's work is done. He is not the less great for that. No man is able to lead all men at all times. It is given to none to be "the light of the world." *Hoc est igitur nuncium: Deum Lucem esse nec tenebras in eo esse ullas.*¹

¹ I John i. 5.

VI

JESUS (THE CHRIST)

I. HIS WORLD AND HIS TIME.

It is now that we turn to a nearer time and a nearer part of the world. Not because there were no teachers of men in other parts and at other times, but because we are here only sampling from among these teachers those whom men have to the greatest extent believed to be the one teacher, the one saviour for all time and for the whole world.

It is a strangely unreasonable idea that any one of them could be so. We are as children in holding such a belief. The vision of a child is small in one way, very wide in another. It sees very far with ease, because it has no knowledge of details. It takes the range of its vision for the limit of everything. It does not think there can be anything beyond. It lives in a very little world and believes that this is the

whole great world. It lives in the present moment, and is ignorant of the past and the future save to a very tiny extent. And thus its vision is really very restricted. So is our vision when we see in any one teacher and helper of men, however great he was, however good and gifted he was, the one Teacher and Helper that ever was or will be, or even the best and greatest of all these. He would indeed need to be God.

There is one who has long been held to have been, and to be such a teacher, helper, saviour. When Jesus lived on earth, men had never been taught, *as a central doctrine* of truth, of the Law, of religion, or wisdom, or philosophy, that they should love each other as human beings. Jesus taught this love, not a love of the senses, nor just the catholic feeling of amity, the feeling of pity, the feeling of sympathy-with-happiness, that Gotama developed, if he did not originate it.¹ This was largely negative in conception. It was the absence of enmity, of anger,

¹ Brahmins and non-conformist teachers of his day are recorded as teaching development of such feelings.

of hate, of hurtfulness (*a-dosa, a-himsā*). It is now taken by Buddhists in a more positive way, nay, has long been so understood by them. But that is because they are living in a later age, and are breathing in some of its best ideas. Jesus taught the love which is service. It is true that in Gotama's own life love meant service, to his glory be it said. But such life-long service of loving compassion in teaching the better way is represented as distinctively the work of a Buddha, of the superman "who has thus come."¹ It is not an idea that is positively and emphatically put in the centre of his teaching. Nowhere does he teach that universal amity means service by every man to his fellows. Buddhists now put *mettā* and service as more central, but it is not due to the influence of their scriptures in the first place. It is possible that the compilers and editors were not great enough to see what, for their founder and his chief disciples, was involved in the doctrine of amity and pity.

¹ Tathāgata. Or, "Who has the true, the real?"

It is true that amity is, in one little poem in the smallest book of those scriptures, likened to mother-love, and Buddhist commentators have not passed over these noble and lovely lines.¹ One or two saintly men in the old anthology of the brethren have testified to the feeling of brotherly love to all.² But the fact remains that such love is nowhere placed in the forefront of Gotama's teaching as a new and necessary order of things, sorely needed, if not *felt as needed*, in an age where there was much lawlessness, tyranny, cruelty, callousness, and where the

*1 E'en as a mother watcheth o'er her child,
Her only child, as long as life doth last,
So let us, for all creatures, great or small,
Develop such a boundless heart and mind,
Even a mind of love for all the world,
Upward and downward, yonder, thence,
Uncramped, free from ill will and enmity.*

Khuddakapāṭha.

*2 So Revata, brother of Sariputta the chief disciple:—
Nay, love I do avow, made infinite,
Well trained, by orderly progression grown,
Even as by the Buddha it is taught.
With all am I a friend, comrade to all,
And to all creatures kind and merciful;
A heart of amity I cultivate
And ever in goodwill is my delight. . . .*

Psalms of the Brethren, p. 280.

future anti-fraternal blight of caste was already seed that was sown. Gotama held no monopoly of service. We have seen him sending out his first disciples to serve, and his church has never neglected missionary enterprise. But the eightfold path of the "divine living" which he charged them to teach does not contain any reference whatever to the feeling or the practice of brotherly love. Nor do we find anything like parables of the Good Samaritan in his own very numerous and equally homely stories.

Now, the teaching that Jesus introduced was just this. The way by which men were to love was to serve ; the way in which they were to serve was to be brotherly, to help each other in all bodily needs, to comfort each other in trouble, to minister to each other in suffering.

There is a contrast in likeness, as we write this, that rises up in our mind, throwing the essential difference in the messages of these "great twin brethren" into relief. In both pictures there is judgment after death, there is the judge and the arraigned man or

woman clad in the new body. In Gotama's picture the judge asks: "Did you not see revealed my first messenger, my second, my third? Did you never see an aged man or woman? A sick man? A dead man? No? You persisted in spite of these three messages in your carelessness, you went on doing evil?" In Jesus' picture we have the judge saying: "I was a-hungered, and ye gave me food, thirsty, and ye gave me drink, a stranger, and ye took me in, naked, and ye clothed me, sick, in prison, ye visited me . . . or did not do these things . . . to me," that is, to your fellow-man, your brother. To his Order we find Gotama on one occasion giving rebuke as Jesus would have done. Bathing a sick, bed-ridden brother, he said: "You are as orphans and must wait upon each other. He who would wait upon me, must wait upon the sick." But in the two judgment pictures, the emphasis, surely, in the one picture is on the good, the moral life, in the other, on the life of loving service.

It is not the highest service that Jesus

taught. That is to lead men to believe in the things of the spirit, and in the life of the spirit and the life hereafter. Jesus aimed at serving the spirit, but men were not ready for this kind of service. They needed teachers for it. They could not help each other—speaking of the multitude—in that way. They were only fit to help each other's lower needs.

When we look at the way in which the lines along which men have helped each other are limited by the body, we are struck by the great change that has come over the world. We now do not think it enough to help the body. We give money to schools and colleges. We are anxious to help the mind of man. We think it is a very wise thing to educate the mind as well as to care for the body. We are willing to be the true well-wishers of the mind. It is a good advance in service.

It was not so some centuries ago. We were of opinion that the best way to help men was to spend our money and our time in caring for the body. We were well

content if we could say we had been the father of the fatherless, the protector of the poor and the shepherd of the lost sheep. We were in a way the saviours of the body, if we saved anything. We were not the saviours of the mind. We read that the poor were in a way an institution. We were to be their helpers. We were not to be their very enders; we were to let them live, but it was a very patronizing help. They were to remain poor because they had been made to be poor. It is now otherwise. But in the days when Rome ruled Europe, it was held to be right that the poor should be always with us. We know that Roman law protected the poor and that the poor were looked upon as a race apart. We think it is well to say this, for it is often forgotten. It is new for the world to look upon the poor as one in kind with the rest of society. It is a very remarkable step in the history of man's growth. It is like letting in the fresh air to a prison.

When we come to consider how the very wish to serve mankind is a new thing, it

is remarkable that we have got so far. We are not now content with seeing after the physical welfare of others. We want to help them to be wiser and cleverer and more able to help themselves in the way of learning what to do, so that they may become less weak in the struggle to maintain themselves at a level above that of poverty. It is a very hopeful sign and there is every reason for hope that men will continue in this faith for this reason, that the pressure of existence does not suffer them to slacken their efforts.

We will now see why it was a very different state of things when the world was under Rome. It was a time of relative peace, that is, the time when we date the beginning of our era: *Anno Domini*. Men were not in a way savages in the empire. There were centres of culture in language, history, music, law, the many modes of argument, and other things. It was a time when forest and jungle, hill and moor were being opened up by roads such as had never been made before, and marsh and sea by naviga-

tion on a greater scale than before. There was a movement going on among the peoples. It was a great stirring of the waters. Life was becoming a thing of less settled ways than before. It was no new thing for people to travel without fear of violence. It was a very varied life as compared with the life of a century earlier. Men were eagerly asking how to gain access to stores of learning. They were not content with the old ways. They were in a way unsettled. The world in general was too savage, too stupid, too much given over to dark and crooked ways to be wanting anyone to teach it new truth. It was not ready for it, not wanting it. But yet, in a conscious way, it did want new light to a very limited extent. And it would seem to be a law or uniformity in events that when, in a conscious way, if only over a limited area, men look for a helper to bring new truth, he comes.

Let us see how that new truth—a truth discerned indeed by the best minds of the age, but not grasped anywhere by the multitude—came to men.

It was in the Roman province of Palestine that the helper arose. One might wonder at so insignificant a spot being chosen. There was a new mixture of peoples living at that time on the shores of the Ægean sea. They were the outcome of the Roman and prior conquests.¹ Rome planted her disbanded mercenary legions on many shores, as other conquerors had done, and this led to a great mix-up of populations. Thus we get in Palestine Jews side by side with men of other races, such as are enumerated as being represented at the first Pentecost. In this way it was a wonderful medley, and one which would act as a powerful solvent to old ideas. It was a ferment of mind, and it is therefore no wonder that, in its midst, a truth that was vaguely in the air would be propagated more quickly than under ordinary conditions.

When the time came for the helper to come forward, he was able to speak to people

¹ Cf. Paul Haupt's *Ethnology of Galilee*. Trans. Third Congress History of Religions, i. 303 ; and the appearance of such new towns as Tiberias and Cæsarea Philippi.

who were not all brought up under one tradition. His words would be differently received according as his hearers were Jews pure and simple, or of mixed parentage, or on both sides foreigners. They would not all think alike.

Into this little new world came Jesus, the son of a woman, the truth about whose descent earth has lost, but whose name, Maria, was less Jewish than Persian. She is said to have been the daughter of one Anna, a name also not Jewish. The flight into Egypt, told in the first of the four gospels, and not to the North, may have been decided by the presence there of kinsfolk of both Mary and her kinswoman Elisabeth, who would probably also be among the refugees with her infant son John. There is a tradition that, of the two boys, Jesus spent all his early childhood in Egypt. If so, it may account for the precocity of his mental growth, as recorded by the gospel of Luke. Egypt was at that time the most learned country in the Ægean.

Maria or Mary was, according to tradition, well educated, and was the betrothed wife of one Joseph, whose ancestry is variously given in two of the gospels, and is traced back to Abraham and even to Adam. It is not clear why Joseph's ancestors should have been given and not Mary's, since it has been held by the Christian church from an early date that Joseph was not the father of Jesus. But it is so, and it is only explicable if we assume that Jesus, when the gospels of Matthew and of Luke were written, was really believed to be physically the son of Joseph. It is a strange thing—and we pass on.

The legend of the visit of the so-called "wise men" to the infant Jesus is of interest in our present inquiry. It shows that the vague idea in men's minds, that a saviour of men was about to be born, was not confined to Palestine, nay, was stronger elsewhere than there. The very lethargic state of Palestine itself as to such a saviour arising is an argument in favour of Jesus as a historical personage.

There is nothing absolutely impossible in the legend, unless we take exception to the naïve words telling of the star guiding and halting over the very stable of the inn where the baby lay. We know by astronomical records that a comet was visible on earth about the beginning of the Christian era—a beginning that is a point yet unsettled with precision. If we are to disbelieve the apocryphal books, and see in Mary one not of Jewish descent, it is not impossible that she had kinsfolk in either Persia or in Egypt, or both, and that news of her hope of a child, of Elisabeth's similar hope, and of wonderful messages received, had been conveyed to those kinsfolk by letter or verbal message. The three Persian(?) gentlemen, whether miscalled "wise men" by a confusion of terms, or promoted to be "kings," are not less historically probable for that. Their visit, anyway, is as well attested as anything in the gospels, and, if true, points to the need at that time of new guidance, as felt seriously and sincerely in at least one country.

2. THE CHILD AND THE MAN.

We have no very reliable account of the youth and early manhood of Jesus. In this we might see a sign, namely, that we are not to concentrate our devotion on the man so much as on his message. Men have failed to take note of this. They have thereby lost much of the truth concerning the growth of the great Helpers, and, in letting their devotion centre itself on their adult persons, they have lost sight to a great extent of the lovely pictures of the real men as they grew into manhood. They have imagined too much the grave, weary seer, weighed down by the sin, the stupidity, the prejudice, the cruelty, the hard-heartedness, the enmity of the men they sought to help. They have lost sight of what must have so won over the men and women of his time to the helper—his radiant beauty and vitality, his overflowing verve and kindness, his happy mien, his bright sincerity and anxiety to help.

They have pictured Jesus, for instance, lost awhile in distant countries, in abstruse

or mystical studies, a being remote from human daily wants and intercourse, a being aloof from common humanity, wrapt in desperate struggles to prepare himself for his mighty work. From the little we can plausibly speculate about, it is possible that he came at one time into contact with the little colony in South Palestine called the Essenes, for there are points in common in their teaching and his: peace, brotherhood, communism, the simple life, etc.

If the truth were known, it would probably be a simpler tale. For in this, his last span of earth-life, the Helper "is born, not made." As a child, already he will have been bringing love and with it light and life. Thus the apocryphal stories told of Jesus represent him as a lovely, imperious boy, eager and able to help. It does not need much imagination to picture him beginning his mission of brotherhood to man in simple, practical ways while yet of tender years. We can see him during a visit to Jerusalem passing down the street, his hand in his mother's or his father's, pausing at some bazaar.

“ Oh, mother, I would like to buy that little clock for uncle ! ” “ We have not the money for it, Yésu. ” “ Oh, but let me try. ” The boy enters and confronts the seated trader. “ So much ? I have not so much money. Will you let me have it for love ? ” “ Love, my son, what is that ? ” “ This, ” Jesus would say, and going round to the trader, he would nestle his soft cheek and his golden curls against the man’s face. “ See, I will help you ; I will tidy up your bazaar ; I will bring you water for your hands and feet—oh ! lots of things. ” “ Well, son, let us see. ” Deftly and quickly the service is rendered. The trader, amused and touched in spite of himself, would say, “ So far, so good, but you must come and do it again. ” “ Oh yes, to-morrow, and to-morrow and to-morrow ” Let us hope he got his little water-clock honestly won. We have not pictured a wholly disinterested service, such as his manhood rendered, but one whereby he could be served so as to render service again. He was a very human little boy in his love and his wisdom.

Here would be a child in no way a saint, a very human boy, yet gifted with a rich personality radiating something *better in degree* than the average boy, and in this case something tending in the direction of service : the open heart, the ready hand and foot, the gentle, joyous word, the loving thought. Let us so think of him become adolescent. Still poor, and following his father's handicraft, he either worked quietly at home, or, it may be, travelled, his bag on his back, as a journeyman carpenter, possibly, in love of the open road, getting as far as Persia, where he might possibly find kinsfolk and friends here, if not there. Who can say whether, had Persia been physically, geographically less unsuitable for a perambulating prophet, he might not have been moved to carry out his manhood's mission in that country. Would it have been kinder to him than it was, centuries later, under other circumstances, to the martyred " Bâb ? "

But even as a travelling carpenter, he would have found countless opportunities

during ten years to carry out a quiet roadside evangel of showing sympathy, help, advice and comfort, everywhere, and at all times not only the Son of Man, but the Brother of Man. Only in this personal, this living way could he make men feel it was worth while to be brotherly, helpful, loving, holy. And surely, in the absence of reliable records, this is the only plausible image to construct of the early years of a man chosen with such a mission as his. There is more in his brief public life than this. There are the start as a prophet, the exercise of abnormal therapeutic power, the founding of a colony, club, or "church." But the way of him, the lovely brotherliness of him : this was his very nature and essence. It had not to be put on in his thirtieth year like a new knight's armour. It poured from him all his life. It was just he.

The very few words the gospels contain of the preceding years refer firstly to an episode of Jesus' boyhood, and secondly to the so-called temptation by the devil.

The former shows us a very studious

precociously gifted child, imbibing the teaching of the Rabbis. We see that the way he is absorbed makes him oblivious of everything else. The reply he is said to have given is a very striking one: "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" What did he mean? How could Rabbinical learning help in carpentry? We incline to think that the words have been a little twisted. It is said that the words refer to his coming mission. That may be. But it is curious that the lore of the Rabbis should have taught him much about the fatherhood of God, or the brotherhood of man. It is possible that he was seeking for testimony to these things. It is impossible to know. We are very doubtful if any revelation of God as Father came to him so early. The matter can never be explained.

The latter episode points to some doubtings of heart, or some suggestions by unworthy persons summed up in the words "tempted of the devil." Now Jesus was hardly one to believe in gods or devils. He had faith

in one God who loved the world, who cared for all living things. It is not easy to say how he figured this person or these persons referred to as "the devil" (*diabolos*). He once rebuked Peter with the epithet Satan! the Jewish name for devil. We are told he said, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven." And we are told he healed people who were "possessed of devils," that these at times spoke to him, that he once bade them transfer themselves into the bodies of swine. This tale we read with suspicion, when we also read of his thoughtfulness for the caged doves, in his purging of the Temple courts: "Take these things hence." Either there is inconsistent behaviour, or one of the episodes is not true. But as to the three temptations, they are such as remind us of Gotama and Mâra; they are such as a man might be conceived as saying to test Jesus withal, quite apart from ability to make good the proffered reward. It would give him opportunity of evoking replies which would show Jesus' attitude.

It is more likely that, in these little scenes, Jesus reveals his own searchings of heart. He had psychic power; he had faith in God. It was always possible that he might be suffered to work a supernatural feat of levitation, like that later one of walking on the water. But whereas the writers of the gospels evidently believed in not one personal devil only, but in "legions," we do not see clearly that Jesus entertained such a belief. Else he had not called Peter "Satan." Words of such belief are put in his mouth. It is useless to make further guesses.

But we may say this: If Jesus was man, he will have felt great searchings of heart just at the time when he was being impelled to give himself wholly to public teaching. We learn from the records that he could be torn by doubt, could hesitate, could be almost in despair, could be a dumb oracle till he gained, apparently by "automatic writing," an injunction what to say. So here he hesitates how far he may presume that the psychic powers of which he is

conscious are his to exercise at will, or how far again he would be wise to court the patronage of the rulers of his little world.

But it is a futile task to try to read the real mind of Jesus in any detail. The records are both too slightly sketched and very untrustworthy. They give different versions of the same events and represent him as inconsistent in his teaching. For they were compiled many years after the events they chronicle. They were compiled by men who cannot have been eye-witnesses, by men who, if not exactly uneducated, were not carefully trained thinkers. The writers were, as members of a yet young church, tied in what they wrote by the beliefs that had grown like luxuriant weeds in an institution which had been careless in neglecting, at a far earlier date, to set down an authoritative chronicle of the life and logia of its founder. Belief in the imminence of his Second Advent justified to them this carelessness. Belief that, though he delayed, he would at any time re-appear in power and glory to judge the earth,

made it impossible that they should look upon him as just very man.

Their example has been followed by Christians ever since. Either Jesus is looked upon as God the Son, or, in the belief of some non-Christians, he never really existed. Between these extremes an increasing number do consider him as a real man. This will in time be the prevailing view. But still the majority of religiously minded persons find it curiously difficult to judge the acts and words ascribed to Jesus as they would those of a gifted, nay, an inspired and lovely, yet not perfect man. And though they record that Jesus was now and then impatient, violent, unfair (as when he spoke of being sent to sinners only, or to Jews only, or when he sent away a sick woman to seek a cure elsewhere), undignified (as when he cursed the fig-tree), foolish and unwise (as when he chose an ignorant and unsuitable man to be the leader and organizer of his church), negligent of the respect and duty due to his mother, they nevertheless are unable to see that these traits are so

many flaws in an otherwise noble and courageous and splendid man.

It is not to blame Jesus that we write these things, but to blame our own stupidity. We wonder when the world is ever going to abandon that stupid attitude and open its eyes. Year by year the churches teach it and seem to make no progress. It will need much more education. We are learning many things that are sapping at the roots of this error, and one day the old tree will fall as if it fell of its own choice. And then, and not till then—so it comes to our thought—will the Son of Man once more be happy.

3. HIS WORK.

There is no doubt that the appearance, at the time when Jesus was wishing to begin to teach publicly in Palestine, of the man known as John the Baptist was a very significant event for Jesus. It was no very little help to him that John should point him out as "a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet." We know that John came teaching as a Jewish ascetic prophet

would do, had he lived in the days of the prophets of the Old Testament. He was a Jew on his father's side. His mother may not have been by birth a Jewess, and it is conceivable, nay, almost probable, that John was also taken to Egypt in the hasty flight, and there educated among kinsfolk or friends. John practised the rite of baptism. We do not know how or when this rite started in Palestine. It was a very general practice in so many lands. The Greek knew it and the Roman, and also the Egyptian. In the Book of the Dead it is stated that men were immersed in water when they made profession of faith in the god Osiris, who was a river-deity. And it seems not impossible that the rite was introduced into Palestine from Egypt. It is not mentioned as a usage in Palestine before John's day.

Jesus became himself John's disciple, and was therefore baptized. That he adopted it at first as himself a baptist is significant of his first position, which was to carry on the work of John when John was made

captive by Herod. We do not find Jesus continuing the rite, and it is very likely that he dropped it, as not symbolical of his doctrine of brotherhood. It was more symbolical of that calling to "repentance for the remission of sins" with which Jesus began, as the successor of John.

And a notable day it was when, at the outset of his career, John, his contemporary and kinsman, pointed to Jesus as his successor and superior. There is no clear evidence in the records that the first public utterances of Jesus were the outcome of a long premeditated plan. Nor did he persist in the line marked out by John. To call men to repent was a very usual way for a Jewish prophet to preach in bygone days. We read of Isaiah doing so and Jeremiah, Ezekiel also, Hosea, Amos, Haggai and Zechariah. These had all been in their day revivalists, and who shall say how many forgotten voices since had not kept quick from time to time the old traditional urge? Such a call would be recognized by Jews as a familiar religious line to take.

And the caller would be listened to as a worthy man who was concerned about the misdemeanours of this city and that village, and he would be looked upon as following in the steps of the good men of old.

But for the mixed alien element it was a different matter. They would not take the call in the same way. They would look upon the man calling them as a very curious person, who was in a way meddling with their lives. For what had a stranger to do with what they thought fit to do or not to do, so long as they left him alone? It would seem a great impertinence. We read that they said: Who is this man? We know him not. Is he a prophet? Will he show us a sign? We will listen to him if he can do wonders.

So Jesus began to do wonders. He had what we should now call a therapeutic gift: he had supernormal will-power in healing the body and the nerves of the body. It was a very fount of healing that poured from him. There seemed to be no disease he could not arrest. And when we

consider how will can be used by ordinary persons to control the body, it is not too much to say that, in a very gifted man, it could be used to do much more and even to heal disease and congenital defects like blindness. It is a little strange that we hear of diseases being cured by instigation or suggestion nowadays through hypnotism, and yet most people are ready to say that the miracles wrought by Jesus, let alone those wrought by his disciples, are fictions. We will come to this again presently.

It is too much to try to deal with the work of Jesus in detail. We shall confine ourselves to one or two points.

There is no one who knows when Jesus began to realize that he had a new truth to teach. It was doubtless working in him when he was moved to begin. It was not evident at first. He spoke at first of a kingdom which was at hand. He called it the kingdom of heaven, or more literally, of the heavens. The expression is very new and we do not know where he learnt it. Some say it was a Greek saying, some

that it was Persian. A Greek might have spoken that way when thinking of "the gods." A Persian might have spoken that way when teaching of winning to the worlds of the Avesta. An Egyptian might have spoken that way by his creeds' higher teaching. A good man might have used the term to draw a contrast with the kingdoms of this world.

But it was, in any case, a striking and unusual way of showing that he had a new truth to impart. We believe he did use this way, trusting that it was enough to tell people the truth to bring them to think as he did: "We are a little band. We do not seek to get and to conquer. We want to give and to serve. God gives and helps. As in the heavens so on earth He alone shall rule us, and our kingdom shall be one of brothers. It is not easy to love those who do not love us, to do good to them, pray for them. We will. We will be brothers one to another first."

When he found that men did not see eye to eye with him, he then taught: The

kingdom of God is within you. And so it is still. No man lives within an earthly kingdom where the Highest and Best holds sway, for there is no such kingdom without him ; only, it may be, within him.

And the Jesus-brethren were no longer to aspire to become citizens of God's country ; they were to be sweeteners and seasoners of the countries about them ; not the food itself so much as its salt, as Jesus humorously told them, or as leaven. Humorously said, it was no less a fine way of saying that love must give savour to life. Easily said, it is a hard thing to carry out.

No less so was the higher simile of sonship. Not the teacher only, but all the brothers of the inner kingdom were sons of God. None save the Highest and the Best could be loving, wise, humble, forgiving utterly and always. We are but the little children of that Highest, frail and rather stupid, but growing, ever growing. The fatherhood of God, emphasized in the teaching of Jesus, is as much a simile in his own case, and no more than that, as it is in the case

of all men. But as a figure and no more, it became overshadowed in the gospels by the erroneous teaching of the impending Second Coming.

This is a great change from the purely Jewish idea of a prophet preaching a revivalist mission. It was a simple attempt to found a nucleus of fellowship on the basis of a common humanity, and on nothing else. We have said that Jesus was very possibly a man of mixed parentage. Such a man was the more likely to start such a colony or club of souls. He would not wish for one that was purely Jewish. He would aim at one that was to some extent alien. It was a wise plan, for it would appeal to the extra-Jewish element in the country. The other sections of the population, as being less indigenous than the Jewish, and in a way settlers, would not be held together by traditional customs associated with sights and scenes recalling the past, as for instance the sight of Jerusalem, or of Mount Horeb. They would welcome a proposal to be neighbourly that did not place them in any way

at a disadvantage as foreigners. So it is not surprising that the new brotherhood gathered strength, especially at Jerusalem, where men met in greatest numbers.

There it was that Jesus' "little family of brothers and sisters" was definitely launched. It is an old story that he was not honoured in his own country, that is, about the Lake of Galilee in North Palestine. Is not this the carpenter's son? people said. "And his mother; his brothers and sisters, are they not with us?" He was hampered by the fact that he was known as a Jew; and it would not be a grateful thing among Jews if he started a society or club composed of members where race was of no account. It would make his fellow-Jews think that he was plotting to revive political independence, that the object of his brotherhood was political. So he left the northern villages with words of sharp and solemn upbraiding at the wonderful opportunity they were letting slip past them, and went to Jerusalem, where he was welcomed, but where he could only work in danger.

As to that work, it was not wholly a teaching mission. It was a determined effort to bring help, comfort, strength, life, hope and faith where there was need. It was truly said of him by his church: "Who went about doing good." It was no sinecure for a man psychically gifted to spend himself healing the afflicted in mind and body day by day. It must have cost him wear and tear of body and mind. Healer while he lived, it was in an effort to heal that he made easy his arrest.

He fell a victim to the fear of his own countrymen, fear that a party would thrust him upon them as their king, fear of the Roman sovereignty. So he was made to appear as the people's worst enemy, he, the brother of all men—was ever such a tragedy in the world's history? The way of Jesus would have made the Roman over-rule superfluous, since all, in his way, would have been peaceful friendly citizens. But the way of Rome, of the Jewish officials, of the world, is to view a man with suspicion, not to say fear, till he has shown himself

not an enemy. The way of Jesus was to see in every man *from the first* a brother. The way of the world asks : Am I my brother's keeper ? The way of Jesus was that each man was his brother's, that is, each man's keeper. So the world, suspicious, afraid, its eye only on the present, looked upon the man building up the future, and wiped him out. He came to bring a message of peace, and his coming brought a sword, as he said, and he, the captain, was its first victim.

And against swords his little band was very helpless. That they who were with him till he was taken, and must have recorded what happened to him during those dreadful days, "all forsook him and fled," as they are said to have done, is a probable, if curious lie. They could only watch without, follow where possible, weep and pray. Peter ventured near and to his moral disaster, but it was at peril to his life, as was possibly Simon's bearing of the heavy cross. Some day we may hear them vindicated by their adored Leader, hear that he was able to

speak a passing word of encouragement to continue his work and so show their love, hear that their prayers brought strength and lessened pain, hear that he has been hurt at the hard things said of them.

Concerning the mystery of Jesus' burial and re-appearance we say nothing. For no one is in a position to discuss it without futility, until we have learnt what is the nature of the new body into which we "enter" at what is called death. It would be no mystery to heightened, widened knowledge. It is only a mystery while science yet waits to concentrate upon the evidence.

And these words apply equally of his return to the next world called the "ascension."

4. HIS MESSAGE.

Let us repeat ourselves a little :—

There is one way in which the world has looked upon Jesus. It is to see in him the son of God who was made man and yet remained God. It was the way in which many deities have been imagined as living

for a while on earth. It is the way in which the Greeks imagined Apollo to have been with Admetus, and many other similar cases. This is one way. There is another way in which the world has looked upon Jesus. It is that he never really lived and is but an idea, a myth. There are now many who take the middle way and look upon him as man, a man like ourselves, not perfect, but supremely lovable, gifted above his fellows, holy, not always infallible, yet mostly in the right. This is the man as we see him through the record that we have of him, a record true yet untrue, written long after he lived on earth, by those who had inherited a number of beliefs concerning the man, his mission, his work and his future.

When we look at the way in which Jesus is said to have taught and healed, we see in him a man who was unusually endowed with the gifts of ready, eloquent and effective speech and an extraordinary therapeutic power, exceeding that of other men. It was not so much that he could heal, it was

the way in which he healed. He seemed to bring more than health, he brought hope and faith with the healing. If there was one way in which he was less effective than he might have been, it was in the way he sometimes told those whom he healed that he was not there to help all men, but only some. Here it may possibly be that the hand of a sectarian mind has been writing, or else that sectarian memories had been transforming the facts. We may now never know when and where such error crept in. The whole short life of Jesus gives the lie to such limitations to the boundlessness of his good-will to men. Yet while we are pleading for consistency in him, it is possible he was not always consistent.

With regard to the way Jesus showed in his teaching, it was a way in which he was clearly the bearer of a new message to earth. It was no new thing for the world to hear that men should be good, should put away this and that ill-doing, and be at peace and in good-will one to another. Many teachers had taught so, both in Palestine, in India and in Persia, in China and in Japan.

It was a *new spirit* that Jesus taught. It was a spirit of love, of fraternal love, that seeks not to help itself but others, that forgives to the uttermost, that is patient and long-suffering, that has no enemies, that looks upon the very world itself as a family. To make this clearer, he called God the Father of all, and all men, if they would be so, the sons of God. It is a very strange thing that we should see anything unique in Jesus being a son of God. We are all from God as our source, we are all in a way God's children. Why then should Jesus be considered as claiming a monopoly for himself when he did not deny that he was what men said he claimed to be?

This, then, was the new message he brought to men. He is said to have called it a new commandment. There was the commandment to love God and one's neighbour as one's self. But Jesus put a new meaning into the word "neighbour," showing that we have to love, help, comfort everyone who needs us, whoever and wherever he is. It was a wonderful new light for the earth. The previous messages had bidden men be

friendly, but they had not said: Go and help, except some who were sent out specially as teachers. Here every man is to be a missionary, not necessarily of a doctrine, but of the spirit of love. And the following of the new commandment was to be the test, the hall-mark of the men and women of that new world. "By *this* shall all men know . . . (namely,) if ye have love one to another."

5. HIS CHURCH AND THE RECORDS.

When Jesus left his disciples and his little society orphaned, it was not a very bright outlook. The leaders were for the most part more or less uneducated men. They were highly gifted in a certain way. But the remarks and requests recorded as made by them to him show that they were singularly unfit to take the lead in any great enterprise. They had one essential: they were devoted to him. But it may well be questioned whether they had ever really grasped the true nature of his new commandment. If they had, it is impossible that there should so soon have arisen dissension and even strife among them.

Have we then misunderstood his essential message? It may be so. We think not. We feel it pulsing beneath the often ill-assorted sayings of Jesus, from which it is generally supposed by scholars that the gospel-writers drew their materials. We do not mean that Jesus taught that men should love one another every time he opened his mouth. But we do mean that his teaching and his life, taken together, amounted to a message that loving service was the one thing needful to bind all men together in peace and the good life, and that, beside this, nothing else mattered very much.

When then we look at those from whom he was taken, we should expect to find them carrying out to the best of their power this essential teaching and most lovely example. And so they did for a time. The property of the society was held in common ; the brethren met and acted together with mutual good-will and unanimity. And following their Master's example they prayed for help and guidance, *not to him*, but to the heavenly Father.

We have no right to conclude that the

praying was long-winded, or a series of litanical repetitions. There is no gift made by Jesus to men, outside his central message, more noteworthy than his model of prayer, coupled with his warning against length and repetition. No injunction of his is more systematically disregarded, Sunday by Sunday, day by day, wherever Christians meet for worship and instruction. Brevity, simplicity, sincerity, personal directness—the few words, the felt need, the absence of mediation, how far do these prevail in our liturgies, written or improvised?

The wonder of the first Pentecost came in swift reply, seen and heard by those psychically able to do so. The “gift of tongues,” only in its concentrated intensity more wonderful than what pathological psychology has revealed, enabled the little gathering, already so mixed in racial origin, to spread the teaching more swiftly and effectually. The leaders divided and departed on separate missions, mostly in pairs. And the new church began to take root and grow outside the borders of Palestine.

But its pristine unity and concord were

of short duration. To anyone convinced that the brotherhood of man, lived as well as professed, is the one real hope for peace and progress—and the world is slowly coming to believe this—there is something peculiarly painful in this swift lapse. If, with such an example and such teaching, the first Christians could not sink their quarrels and hold together, who could be expected to be more successful? Never *as a whole* has Christian teaching lost sight of the message of Jesus. But it is as if his spirit has lived on and worked on in the very teeth of the acts of those who have officially represented that teaching. And to some extent, though by no means wholly, this is, we think, due to the often unworthy way, the often untruthful because inconsistent way, in which in the Scriptures sayings are ascribed to Jesus that he cannot well have said. The mental torture that those acts and misrepresentations must have caused, must be causing, him is something one shudders to dwell upon. “They have crucified me afresh”—yea, not once, but millions of times. When will the purgatory of Jesus end?

Into the disputes of the young church it is not for this little book to enter. They centred at first mainly round the question of Jewish rites, such as circumcision. Had the Jewish element prevailed, it is not likely that there would ever have been a catholic church. But the movement grew too quickly in countries and communities that were extra-Jewish.

And yet it was the grip of a Jewish rite that got the yet infant church of Jesus permanently into its clutches. Whether the church was wise or not in choosing to let Paul occupy a position of no less importance than Peter, it is certain that between them these two leaders altered the emphasis in its teaching. Peter was the more heavily responsible, for to him the new commandment had been taught, had been shown directly. Paul was the more educated man, and a man of dauntless courage—as Peter was not—of tremendous energy, self-confidence and a facile speaker. Both had psychic gifts of healing, clairvoyance, clairaudience. Between them, and even while they professed to be turning from the Jews and concentrating

on "the Gentiles," they turned the teaching of Jesus into a Jewish doctrine of redemption by sacrifice, of atonement through shedding of innocent blood—a very serious and permanent perversion of the truth, and one that does not come into the teaching recorded as uttered by Jesus himself. There is the one remark, in the gospels of Matthew and Mark, that "the Son of Man gave himself a *ransom* for many." But *lutron* is not the word used in the Acts and Epistles in their doctrine of redemption by sacrifice, and it admits of other interpretations, such as making good where others—his followers, or those he helped—fell short.

According to those books Jesus is not just the teacher of brotherly love and service ; he saved men not so much by his loving ministry, and by bringing them with childlike hearts and simple prayer direct to God, as by his appeasing, through voluntary death, an angry God. He was as the very lamb of the Jewish Passover, the banished "scapegoat," sacrificed in place of a wicked world. It was a curious way to teach God as a Father caring for all men, "willing

none to perish," and then to show him sacrificing the best of his sons, and letting the worst escape. The punishment, too, awaiting them if they did not consent by faith to this arrangement, was worse than what the worst father would have inflicted on his children, however erring and disobedient.

Nowhere save at the opening of John's gospel is there a word about "the Lamb." It is not till we come to the book called the Revelation that we see the deification of "the lamb" and read of the sacrifice of it as saving mankind by its blood. It is possible that we have here a blending of Passover rites and the bull-slaughtering symbolism of that Mithra-worship which at one time pressed Christianity so hard as a rival.

The way in which Jesus was associated with the Passover lamb in the last supper or Passover feast, celebrated in Roman Christianity as the "sacrifice of the Mass," is actually a strong argument against his having any idea that he himself was the sacrifice. He is said to have bidden his

disciples eat bread and drink wine as if they were eating and drinking him. Now the sacrifice was not consumed by those who brought it. It was either entirely consumed by fire, or in part by the priests only (Lev. i, ii, vii, etc.), after it had been presented to a god, and the savour of it enjoyed by the god. Hence it would have been improper for Jesus to have offered himself in this symbolic way to his disciples, who were in no way whatever priestly celebrants. He would have bidden them burn the meat and the bread, and pour over these the wine. Surely the words ascribed to him at that supper are falsely ascribed. Surely he only bade them remember him and their bond of brotherhood with him each time they met together at such a little feast.

But the cloud of primitive Jewish rites, organized afresh in the Mosaic ritual, lay stretched out over the church from the beginning, blotting out the bright hills of the joyous, happy tidings brought by man's great Brother—tidings which angels had brought singing. In that message, marred by no artificial cleavage of men and women

into priests and laity, monastic celibacy and mated worldlings, elect race and pagans, the world was given an opportunity, if it had ears to hear, of living the happy joyous life of brotherly love. They to whom it was given to tell of the opportunity were the first, some more some less, to mar the message. They did not give it in its purity. They did not live it in their counsels.

Had they done the one and the other they would never have quarrelled and divided over doctrines. It is a house of very bad brethren that is divided against itself. Brotherly love would have held them all together. Brothers would not have consigned brethren who differed from them theoretically to a doom which the children of a heavenly Father could not have accepted as a possible belief.

And as the church could not then overlook, so now and henceforth it can never overlook its differences and live in love and unity. The cleavage is too deep. It is only a matter of time till that cleavage will cause it to fall in pieces. It is in pieces now. No power on earth can set it up

again as one body, for none of the pieces will sacrifice all other doctrines and adopt once more, and stand or fall by, the one doctrine, or endure the one and only test : By this shall men know ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one another.

Very different might the history of the church have been, had there ruled in it the spirit and example of one little modern community, that of the Friends or Quakers. But there have been few, alas ! in that history who have so maintained, in their revival of it, the very central tradition of its founder as this body. Quakers have ever been lovers of peace and concord, lovers of the simple and the true, lovers of brotherhood, haters of sacerdotalism, of formulas, of ritual. They are the salt of the Christian world ; as a Christian society none is so nearly *well*. Had the Friends ruled the church, they might have saved it. They might have made it the way of helping all men, if not for all times.

We are not to look to the church for guidance in the future. It did its work for many centuries, work of mercy, work

of refining, of culture, lamed as it was by its false doctrine and by its schisms. We must look elsewhere for light ; we must look to the new age, to its wants and its ideals. The New Commandment must be our Old Commandment. And we must have another—one that will satisfy those wants no less than did that Old Commandment. It must say to us, Behold and see ! to love man is well, and to serve man is to love. But to hope is well, and to know is better than to believe.

Dimly as in a vision Jesus appears as the will of the world struggling after, reaching out after, God as Love, and more vaguely, after God as Light and Life. The will of the world has been struggling, reaching out more or less ever since, but always ignorance hinders it (though not ignorance alone). It does not *know* enough to struggle intelligently. It wrestles in the dark, not seeing ahead. It fights in the valley. It should be fighting on the hillside. The new commandment must give Light with Love.

VII

MUHAMMAD (THE PROPHET)

I. HIS YOUTH AND HIS TIME.

THERE is no one more calculated to excite the feelings of men to enthusiasm on the one hand, or to execration on the other, than the man known as Mahomet or Mohammed, more properly Muhammad. He was a very gifted man, for he was highly psychic and was trained in the learning of his time. He had a very eventful career as a youth. His father was a very distinguished man, who kept many camels and had great property in the very south of Arabia, called Arabia Felix. It was a very brief happiness that the father had in marriage. He died absent on a journey before his child was born to Amina, his wife. The child thus left fatherless grew up under the care of his mother and grand-

father, and from his early days gave high promise of developing into a remarkable man.

He was not always in good health. He was liable to epileptic fits, and in these those who reared him thought they saw evidence of the presence of evil spirits, and resorted to spells and charms to exorcise them. We are of opinion that the attacks were rather a symptom of the very unusual capacity of the child to be in communication to a very abnormal degree with the dwellers of other worlds, who were not sufficiently careful of his strength and capacity to endure such revelations. Be that as it may, the young Muhammad grew up to be a vigorous man, and was immune as adult from such attacks.

We meet him at twenty-one engaged in civil warfare. Again, at twenty-five, he began to teach. It is not clear what in the first instance he did teach. The books about him usually say that he began with a message urging men to be wise, by which he meant good to each other. But he

left that and began to teach a doctrine of repentance and of faith in the one God.

It was not a monotheistic age. There were many local deities, tribal deities, worshipped each by a limited number of persons for whom they represented a sort of omnipotence. It was as a revolt and protest against these that Muhammad combined all their highest attributes into one personality and taught that Allah is One. He was also in revolt against the divisions in the Christian church which had now separated into East and West. And he was horrified at the resolution of the One God into three persons, and into the prayers offered to saints and to the Virgin Mother. So he launched himself into a crusade against all creeds and cults which derogated in any way whatever from the unity of the Deity.

2. HIS WORK.

There is no need to go into details over the success of his teaching. It was extraordinarily successful, and it led to Muhammad so far forgetting his youthful humility as

to call himself the chosen prophet of God. We are not saying that he was not. But the way in which he dwelt upon it was fatal to his success, for it re-acted against him not only among other races and in other times, but also in his own day and country. He was attacked by his opponents for blasphemy, and was compelled to flee from his home and take shelter in the wilds, dwelling in a cave. It was a brief exile. The man was no humbug. He was very sincere, and his doctrine fell on fertile soil.

It made a special appeal to the Arabian mind. This was Semitic in its need for one God. The local cults all showed this in their several limited ways. They were so many forms of monotheism. They needed widening and to be made more catholic. Then there was simplicity in Muhammad's teaching of how man should bear himself to his fellows. It was an extension of family virtues. It was to make the family a type of the race, and of the world of men. It was a code that could be carried out by every man and woman without priest or church or ritual.

When we look at its effects upon the Arabian mind, we are struck by two things : the zeal for God shown by the Muhammadans, and the will to be his servants, and next, the comparatively little extent to which the followers of Muhammad were the worse for low ideals respecting women. They were a very monogamous race naturally ; they had but little tendency to polygamy. They were infected herein by the few who were always polygamous. And if Muhammadan ideals as to the position of women left much to be desired, they were herein only as was the world in general, save that they were less unworthy in their treatment of women than Greek or Roman. They were groping after a better ideal, for the Kuran is, in its way, a very progressive work on the position of women. The world was then not progressive enough to follow it.

To revert to the former salient feature of the Muhammadan mind : to be the child and servant of God is one of its central tenets. Muhammadanism is devotion to God—"Islam" means surrender, and the

surrender is absolute devotion of the self to God. There is herein truth, truth of the spirit. The extent and intensity to which the devotion becomes fruitful for good-will depend on the direction it gives to life. That it should lead them who surrendered themselves to force others to surrender to the same object of worship at the point of the sword was not in Muhammad's original mission. Muhammad himself had little liking for fighting. Inclined as he was to be impatient, violent, lawless, he was often in disputes and strife. His life was stormy, and often literally a "struggle for existence," nor was he generally a popular man. But he was timid rather than a warrior. His strength lay in his great sagacity and resource. He could lead, manage, organize men. Handsome, too, and accessible, he was his followers' friend and counsellor. Honest, pious, and (save on occasions) just, he was the guardian of his little church. But he did not love men as Jesus did. Called to teach and uplift and father the rough, warlike Arabians

of the south and west—a harder lot to handle than the mixed folk of Palestine—he showed himself a little wiser, a little more gifted, a little juster, honester, more kindly than his fellows. And he was really anxious to bring good to his people, to watch over them and teach them that *Islam*, that surrender to the One God in which he sincerely believed as the way to salvation.

The latter years of his life are less edifying. His position was assured and we see him worldly and polygamous. No better in this respect than his followers and no longer ahead of his age in moral worth. And he had become convinced that he was in a special, a unique way, the prophet, the spokesman of Allah; that he alone could teach men the true things of God and convey to them His will. He was undoubtedly a medium, not a trance medium, but capable of yielding himself to be “spoken by” unseen speakers. It is well known that such mediums on these occasions speak as with the voice of a different person, even of the other sex. And Muhammad

doggedly persisted in believing that in his case this unseen speaker was Deity itself, that he was "possessed" by God. He "felt" it was God.

The monstrous claim was one which no humble, saintly man could have put forward. It vitiated the pure monotheism to which he had testified from the first, and to which he had surrendered himself utterly. He had swept aside the intermediary of priest, altar and sacrifice, only to thrust in their place one frail, fallible, far from holy, human instrument as alone sufficient to come between God and man.

3. HIS CHURCH.

The growth of Muhammad's church from the little colony of some 2,000 strong which he left to the great world of Islam is one of the most striking features in man's history. The growth was quick because the teaching appealed to racial need and to racial will. The Arabians were strongly monotheistic, but to embrace all men under such a creed, to see in their deity not a tribal but a world

God, was a new idea. It came as a breath from the sea. So near it came to "pure religion and undefiled": God is one and there is no other, and prayer is man's sole link with Him; Man as so praying in self-surrender is the true, the wise child, servant, messenger of God—as indicated in the Kuran—and yet so wide became the departure from this pristine purity.

Into the history of that growth, into the history of the compilation of the Kuran at the hands of sectarian editors, it is not for this little work to attempt to inquire. The aspiration of the Kuran is towards a world-Deity and a world-faith. But what the editors *see* is a great parochial institution centred at Mecca, and having regard, beyond the sons of Arabia, only to the earlier rival creed of those people with whom they had from the first come into contact—the Jews and neighbouring Christians. The men of Muhammad's church became involved in the struggle of Arabia for existence through the pressure of invaders from the East. She lay along the sea and had to keep herself

from being shoved into it. She did not wait for that, but anticipated such a crisis and became aggressive. Islam had never meant the non-resistance to aggression taught by Jesus as the way of brother to brother. And it developed the opposite extreme. In place of not striking because it was a brother you would strike, it taught that a man was to be struck that so he might be made a brother. It was in the process of worldly aggressiveness as Arabians that those who were followers of Muhammad began to use conversion as a weapon of war. There was no real need for this, and, we repeat, Muhammad is but very indirectly responsible for it. But the melancholy development is none the less true: He first corrupted his pure faith by his claim to be oracle and prophet of God, and further by the worldliness of his later life; his people completed the corruption by holding out conversion at the point of the sword as the price of safety.

It was a terrible decay of the faith and utterly ruined it as one that could commend itself to the world of the future as a creed

for all time and for all men. Like mediæval, and all but modern Christianity, it stank of blood and persecution. These fouled the waters from its source. Its work for good was done. That its followers were often good, and even saintly men and women, was due, less to the state in their day of the creed they professed than to the growing sense of righteousness and wisdom in the more civilized places of the earth, where the work of such creeds had borne fruit in the foremost mind and will of the age. The creed was like the sheath, whence the bud of the better life had burgeoned.

VIII

NEWER CREEDS

So far, certain of the older creeds have been sampled, which have as their central feature in the eyes of the world a personal figure to help and to save. Before we come to the needs of the new world, let us glance very briefly at some newer creeds of that world. For they also have a work to do, even if they have brought to a corner, or to more than one corner of the world no new message.

Three of these that are flourishing here and there among us date their rise from the last century only, and are severally claimed by their adherents as being sufficient to satisfy the religious wants of the whole world for all time. Is this so?

Of these Bahā'ism, the direct sequel to what was called Bābism, is a movement originating with Persian Muhammadans. It

teaches the brotherhood of man, the service of man, purity and simplicity of life, gentleness, kindness, charity and good-will. It teaches the worship of the one God, and it also, like Muhammadanism, believes that its saintly teacher and organizer Bahā'u'llah was directly inspired by, or was "the great manifestation of" God. Indeed, just as Muhammadanism was at its inception a new Hebraism or Abrahamism, so Bahā'ism is a new Islam. No prediction is here attempted as to whether it will continue to grow for any length of time at its present rate, or persist when grown. It has been sorely tried with martyrdom, and the course of its development has had to suffer cruelly at the hands of sectarian fears and spite, and political tyranny. So far it has survived and more than survived. Itself originally a survival—namely, of the love doctrine of Jesus and of the pure theism of Muhammad—it is a fusion of these. And a fusion or product is in a way a new creation. Will this suffice for the wants of the new world in so far as the world is new? For the

world has had a way, now in this corner of it, now in that, of being in travail with a want that it has needed, a new message, a new vista of life to satisfy it. And the fusing of former messages has not sufficed.

Because of its lacking in this respect, it may be that Bahā'ism is but helping the world to make ready for new light to be brought by a yet unborn teacher. It may prove adaptable and be the very harbinger of that light. But it brings us as yet no new message. It is a fervent and sincere movement, but it is neutral minded, leaving many ways open, but venturing on none.

Then there is the Brahmo-samāj movement in India. Curiously little is known, in the West at least, about its rise. And its central figure Keshab Chunder Sen, who died eight years before the Bahā'ist leader, was not its originator. Like Bahā'ism it is a fusion of the teaching of Jesus and of a pure theism, of Brahmā conceived as Father of all men, to be worshipped by all directly, priest, sacrifice, ritual, asceticism and caste being put aside. For Brahmo'ism is not

Brahmanism. Its eclecticism appeals to intellectual India, but it may be questioned whether it will ever be Indian enough to win over India, or sufficiently un-Indian to make conquests in the world that is not Indian.

India may well have a great part to play in modifying the culture of the West. And then it is not impossible that she will come, bearing in her hands, with other gifts, a purging and a quickening of Western fraternity and Western worship of God, that have so long been muddled and crusted over by our religious and political enmities. May these things be !

And yet Brahmo'ism brings no new light, no fresh vision, no clear message, no yet unfelt emphasis.

Lastly, there is the movement known as Christian Science, the creation of a remarkable woman-helper of men ; albeit it was her father who first inspired her. Here we do seem to find a teaching which, if it is not new, is certainly one of a new emphasis.

The awakening of the materialism of our age to the significance and power of mind

is for us a new growth, and has been an advance in the way to what is true. The world of mind has been—till lately—far too much ignored *generally* by doctors, by teachers, by the clergy. Yet it was not ignored by the wisdom of Greece, and it was the way of Jesus in his healing. It is by the power of mind over body that men and women have endured things incredible and wrought things wonderful. And when these things are considered, it were truer to call body an epiphenomenon of mind than to call, with a phase of modern thought, mind an epiphenomenon of body.

But it is just in its emphasis on mind that Christian Science vaulting “o’erleaps itself and falls on the other.” For if body is man’s instrument to be wielded by mind—more or less—so also is mind man’s instrument. Through the force or instrumentality we call mind he works the instrument we call body. “He” is not to be subsumed under either. Very mysterious is the human entity. That which mentally is will, in the body is action. As mind we are thought, as body we are matter. Truth is not won by blinking at

either fact. We are not just body-cum-mind. We are soul, self, "you," "I," we are mind, we are body. But "soul," "self," "I" is our label for what we are. "Mind," "body" are our labels for ourselves as using, as exercising, as self-expressing. Christian Science makes man mind, it makes God mind, it makes truth, light, life to be mind, it makes man not lord of mind, but lord as mind. For it the dual or plural mind of pathology must be a great crux, for it must mean dual or plural selves as "one" man.

The movement has done, is doing good work. But it has no great future before it as that which can satisfy the needs of the new world. It brings consolation and quickening to many lives in present trouble. Yet it shows no light ahead. It brings us up against a stone wall. For it is based on a wrong conception, and it has not set its face to the light.

Many other creeds might be here taken in review, creeds of this newer world and its eclecticism, but this little book can only sample one other.

IX

THE POSITIVIST MOVEMENT

ONE more of the newer creeds we have yet to notice, of which we may almost say that it is already of the past, its work as gospel done. This is Positivism, called also Comtism. It had much moving power in the last century, in that it brought easement and Stoic strength to many who had parted from the traditions of their youth and were as orphans in "this world's vast orphanage."

Not ours the wish to say that, in so finding a refuge they were not sincere. We think, on the contrary, that many of its followers were among the most sincere spirits of their age, and many of them were in the van of scientific and philosophic thought. They had no wish to be traitors in religion. They were rather seeking a substitute for the religion they knew. They did not con-

centrate on the nature and world of the mind. They looked rather to the outer world, and its men and women. And sorrow was theirs in witnessing how little men really had the welfare of the world at heart. They were on the side of the emancipation of the slave and of woman. They were not of those who asked, "Am I my brother's keeper?" They were self-constituted keepers. They said, "We are from humanity. We have been built up by humanity in the past. We can only repay our ancient and great indebtedness by building up humanity in the present and the future." They were dim-sighted builders, for they took account neither of base nor of apex. But they built as they knew how. And they felt that noble love for the race, which is of the new world's needs and demands. In another way also they were but little men to be world-builders and world-warders. They did not rightly discern the nature and mission of the real Helpers of men. For them Gotama Buddha was a mythical man, Jesus Christ was a mere man

magnified beyond all reason, Muhammad was an impostor. Yet they were the very men who, breaking loose from tradition without losing their love for the race, might well have looked deeper into the significance of the messages brought by those Helpers.

But they were blinded by their lack of faith in the Will that was designing the messages and sending the men. So they were the dim-sighted leaders of the blind. They had no very good idea where they were going. They had no personal future in their belief. They dwelt on the future of humanity as a block or mass, and neglected the individual stones. Herein they made bad warders for "thee" and "me." Nay, they were warders of no one, not even of the actual whole, for they warded an idea, an ideal, not that which was fact. They were poor helpers, for they felt compassion for a world of abstractions.

Theirs was not the high vision of seers. They saw a humanity getting slowly better, but ending as to whole, as to part, only with an end that was, is, and will be of the earth,

earthy, whether it be the merging into earth of the body, or the merging into the common mind of the mind. They had no whither to point the departing, save to bid him be lost in humanity. They had no real comfort wherewith to stay the mourner. The stream of life flowed on, and they could not rescue the submerged and the drowning.

What they held and what they taught was much "in the air" at that time. It was a saving wisdom which said—though it had been said long before—we are brothers one of another, for we are human beings, and we have to work for each other. Yet the utmost they could do as warders of their brethren was to warn those who followed, or to encourage them to follow. But for goal to point to they had none worthy of the name. They could not say, "At the last we shall become as God for we shall be with God," for their creed was without God. And they themselves were blind to the dangers from which they wished to be warding men. For the dangerous weapons of the evil which fights against good, and that in no negative

manner, are the worthy, or let us rather say, the well-wrought efforts of the race to preserve itself as it goes on its toilsome way. Well-wrought, we say, in that the evil habits have been sustained in the face of the ill results they bring.

We have not dwelt on the individual founders or followers of Positivism. It had its roots in the French Revolution,¹ in those ideas which had been germinating in that time of ferment and of the overthrow of much that was very little worthy to survive. But the acknowledged founder was Auguste Comte, of Montpellier, a man not of high birth, nor of repute in after years save only as the author of the works which attempted to set up first a philosophy, and then a polity of positivism. He suffered at one time a mental breakdown. Yet he was not a psychic, nor can he be held to have been

¹ " . . . a time when ideas were with fresh vigour making armies of themselves, and the universal kinship was declaring itself fiercely . . . a time when the soul of man was waking to pulses which had for centuries been beating in him unheard, until their full sum made a new life of terror or of joy." So the most eloquent of them: George Eliot (in *Daniel Deronda*).

an ardently religious man. Not eager in general to help others, he yet strove to get his neighbours to come together and be interested in the race as a whole. Gospels might be given up, yet they should believe. They should believe in what they knew. Yet he bade them to believe in an abstraction made up of and going beyond what they knew. He was but little wiser than many of his day, but he had a holy love for humanity, and his was the wisdom that comes from such love. He was a little man to have stirred so many minds. But it was less he than the world's need he represented that made the stir. He was the voice of his age, but he was not a world-helper ; certainly he was not a helper for all time.

X

NEW NEEDS

WE come at last to the question with which we started. What of the new needs, portending a new light, which will cause this new world of ours one day to be in travail? For assuredly there will be a new message, such as none of the newer churches we have considered is revealing to us. No old creed will satisfy those needs. The new faith will be neither Buddhist, nor Christian, nor Muhammadan; it will be an outcome of the wants, the hopes and aspirations of these, our times, and of the near future. It will be based on the moral life; it will involve the fraternal love of man to all beings; it will not stop there. It is a gospel which will bring to the knowledge of man the life of each man before this present earth-life and the

life of each man after this present earth-life as a continuous series, in which he occupies, in each span or spell of life, a different body exercised and in part controlled by a mental force or forces. This is not to say that man is body and mind. These are his implements. The man himself is something conceivably distinct, though not perceptibly so.

When this is thoroughly grasped then man will be in a position to get a juster conception of the way in which he is no mere creature of a brief day on earth, and then the denizen, as some vaguely imagined personality, of a vaguely imagined heaven or hell or purgatory. And it is then that he will the better understand how in the past ages he has been tried and tried, so that he might with fullest opportunity learn to grow from the remote beginning of his career up to the present.

It is true that there is no one so well able to teach this yet as to make it a gospel. When a great teacher comes, there will always be a corner of the world more ready for him than any other corner. When we say this we do not forget that Palestine

killed Jesus. But Jesus' work was not killed, nay, it may be said to have grown the quicker through his death. Now the earth is hardly ready yet for the new teacher. It has begun to ask itself: Are we to be satisfied with a Christianity that says we are to be saved by a vicarious death of a wonderful man, and not by our own growth in love and godliness? Are we to see in God a Father who consigns a great part of the world past, present, and future to eternal fire, or at least to fearful agonies because of their misdeeds? Are we to be content to accept a book, which is full of little contradictory and inconsistent statements, as the inspired word of God? Are we to be content with a Christian church which says that its new commandment is that we love one another, and which sets that commandment at defiance by divisions and strife and exclusiveness and jealousies and envy?

And when the earth has asked itself these questions a little longer, it will begin to answer, "*We will not.*" But it will not turn to other old creeds as better lamps. For

they too were made to suit other corners of the earth at other times. And they too have their perverted doctrines, their inconsistencies of scripture, their internal divisions and dissensions. They can no more be recreated in their pristine simplicity and unity than can Christianity.

What is the earth to do? Is she to give up creeds? Is she to be content with not doing unto others what she would not have others do to her? Is she to follow along the beaten way of the good life till death ends it, and there leave life as if life could die with its tool the body? Is she to make no effort to pierce the gloom of ignorance? We think not. We are not so small-minded. We can say with the Psalmist, "Though I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, yet still *Thou* art there. Thy right hand doth lead me." We believe that the right hand is leading us, and that by that hand we shall come out from darkness into light. For we are in a way *the very children* who have been led in the past by Gotama, the very

children who have been led in the nearer past by Jesus. And in the future we shall be led by one who shall then speak as never man spake, though not as ever man shall speak again, and whom we shall in that day love and follow.

It is but a little way to go from the subject of the very will of the helper to the will of man. In the helper we see the wish of the world's best child to draw his fellows nearer to what is for him the highest and best. We see Gotama striving to persuade men to be good as they very well knew how, to be friendly, kind, peaceable and gentle. We see Jesus striving to show men how to be neighbours, how to be brothers one of another. We see Muhammad striving to bring men from idolatry to worship the one God without other gods, without priest or sacrifice. We see other helpers striving to help men in one or other, or all of these ways. We are waiting now for the next helper. When he shall come it is not these past strivings that we shall need to have as

new revelations. We have had them and have recorded them, imperfectly it is true, but well enough to be able to learn by them, if we are wise, what was the thing really revealed.

Our task at present is not only so to live as to show that the old revelations no longer need for us a new revealer, but to make ourselves ready for the new revelation. It has rightly been said, we repeat, that when a revealer, a helper, a saviour comes, he finds there are those who are looking for him just when and where he comes. Hitherto he has come to just that corner of the earth, at just that time, where and when he was looked for. This is peculiarly the case with those three great helpers with whom we have especially dealt. Other helpers were less expected, or in a more limited way, it may be, because they brought no such new revelation, but one that revived, or combined in reviving what had come before.

In the case of the next healer, we have to expect a much wider looking forward. This is because we no longer live in corners

of the world, cut off from other corners as much as we once did. The whole world is now in a sense our corner, and no corner "liveth unto itself" to the same extent as in the past. We come and go, and it is a very little way to get round the world. We wait for a helper, but it is many who will wait, not a few. We are very hopeful that, when he comes, he will find us ready. And if he does find us ready, it will be because we shall want greatly what he has to bring us.

What do we want greatly? We want to be enlightened about life, about its source, its duration, its end, if end there be. We want to be told by one who knows as now we do not know, where we are going as we pass through death to new life, and whence we came as we passed through death to this earth-life, and where we go as we pass through death in the life beyond. We want to have the fear of death, the anguish of bereavement, the apparent futility of so much dying brought to the solution and the solace that light gives. To watch death coming, and to meet it unafraid we

need to know more what life is. The beasts perish quietly when it comes to that. We also pass quietly, many of us with a composure that is akin to that of beasts, since it is the resignation of the ignorant. Knowledge may bring us a loftier resignation; knowledge may calm the fear of anticipation that beasts scarcely know; knowledge may convert the ache of parting and the loneliness that few beasts feel into a wonder of hope and consolation.

But while our vision is limited to this mind only, to the body only, we shall not come to know. While we judge, while seekers after truth by way of science judge, that it is of interest to them, incumbent upon them, to study this earth-body only, this earth-mind only, we shall not come to know.

But we do not need light on death only. We need more light on how to live. We have spoken of nascent, of growing ideals of love, of wider duties and service. Many of these are scarcely as yet within the range of what is called practical politics. See only how the growing will of the world to peace

is thrust back now by fear, now by false views of the hopelessness of man's growth. And some among us on our little watch-towers cry "how long?" Is there no light to be found showing us such ideals either come to fulfilment, or nearer thereto by at least a stage than they are with us? Sometimes we may see such a stage being approached by the younger nations, emigrant children of the old world. So have we noted humaner ideals come into action as to the treatment of the prisoner in the West—to name no others.

But have we then no other children of whom we can learn save these? Are there none who are flitting from this corner of earth and that into another new world, world without end, among them our noblest and best? And are our imaginations so dull that we cannot follow them any whither save into the grave—as do alas! so many of our poets—save into some inert, idle slumber of what is foolishly called discarnate existence, save into some nebulous, indefinitely prolonged purgatory, hell or heaven? Even if we have no knowledge—

and the old creeds help us too little—is it not wiser to train our imagination, until light comes, as come it will, to picture these children of earth, who are not lost but gone before, as reborn into a world much akin to our own, near, not remote, relatively *otherwise* if not very much *otherwhere*?¹ To picture them distributed much as they are here, but living under conditions so far not the same, that life is easier, and thus greater progress in social and political progress has been possible?

But possibly not very much greater progress. The doctrine of evolution has still a great work to do. It has to expand to more worlds than one; it has to contract from the species to the individual. It has to show not man, but “a man,” as passing at death not to any fixed and final state of being; it has to show that there remains no such thing as arrested growth, as unneeded growth. May it not be that we shall pass, we of this little country, into a little country where, as here, there is the world-law of

¹ This, surely, is the really great problem of Relativity now and in the near future.

change with growth and lapse, where, as with us, and somewhat before us, despotism has had to make way for a rule by the people for the people ; where fierce, cruel " purgatory " for prisoners has been swept away by humane educative training, where education is held to be the sacred right of every person arriving on those shores, where, even it may be as we write, so nearly ahead of us may that world be, secret diplomacy is being replaced by open councils, and where disbanding of armies is taking place as the outcome of that full-grown will for peace which here is so tender a child ?

Visions ! says the reader. Yes, we also say visions ! Let it be granted for a moment that they are visions of things not only imagined but true. How great then might be the benefit to earth, if she could be *told* of how these victories of peace and righteousness were gained, and of how far they seem to be working for good ! How important for earth to lose no time in concentrating on how she may get to be told ! How important for earth to concentrate on how she may be told by the

truly worthy of that world, by men and women who will tell the truth and nothing but the truth! How important for earth to see to it that the intermediaries on her side also are of the best of her sons and daughters, and that all the sporadic, windy, irresponsible stuff that passes through the mouths or the writing hands of so many squalid paid "seers" among us to-day be no more a delusion and a snare!

We have never given the matter a fair chance. We have no idea what, *by concerted action of the best*, we might not come to know. The learned, with one or two bright exceptions, say, these things do not "appeal to us." The pious say, "Wait." And they turn away, and the light that waits to lighten our darkness reaches us dim and distorted along soiled channels, where the curious ignorant and the sorrowful ignorant mingle their inquiries. And among sober, average-educated folk the prospect of new knowledge this way, the methods for making it a noble, rational quest are in the conversation of the cultured, practically taboo, taboo as have been other great quests

in the hours before sunrise—the emancipation of the slave, the wiping out of religious tests, the enfranchisement of woman. . . .

But what a day of light may break over the earth, when the best and holiest of her trained minds, in established conjunction with the best and holiest among those, who in our own day have left us and passed on, hold council, by mutual arrangement as to methods of intercourse, on the things they hold it desirable to bring about both here and there! Then shall we live, not as now in two hemispheres only, but in two worlds, and wonder we were ever content to live in one only.

And in so living, so expanding to the new needs, the new duties of this our wider life, we shall think, we shall hope, we shall speak in the interests of the two worlds and not the one only, we shall seek to serve in love two worlds and not one only. We shall not only seek for help and guidance from those who have gone on, we shall ourselves try to help and to guide now this man, now that woman, these children, those friends, those human brothers and sisters who have

left us for a while, yet who may be so near. Then, too, will our vision so expand that the next world, its wisdom, its further growth, will by no means be for us a final goal. We shall realize that, just as the wise of our next life's home might even now be our schoolmasters—a little wiser than their pupils—so they themselves are the pupils of yet wiser teachers, and these of yet wiser ones beyond—O dull that we are and end-makers of little wit, to see only to the next turning and call that the Eternal Terminus!

Imagination hovers ahead in our science. It has, it would appear, a great work yet to do in our sickness and health by hovering ahead of our will. It prepares us for new knowledge. It directs where we shall set our will. Till we are ready—and we are not yet ready—for this expansion to new knowledge, let us give imagination more play, not as children fancy, yet with the humble, hopeful heart of the little child, one hand guided by science and one by the poet's insight, and ahead the beckoning finger of God's messengers. Let us reserve brief intervals, in train, tube, tram, on hill and in

woods and by the sea, in church and at home, wherein to cultivate the imagination of what this earth might be, if the fellowship hinted at above could become sober fact. Let us then and there direct also our will to WANT this great enlightenment of our darkness. So that imagination and will may in the long run bring us to the way to get knowledge.

For by knowledge we grow. It is by the light that we walk at ease and with courage. Now we walk in a dim valley. Light upon life—life as involving many births and dyings—is what we need. And we shall get light in measure as we so love, that we are worthy of light. If we live by love, we shall grow into the ability to conceive love as universal and creative, and be the better prepared to receive the message of light.

In no higher way are we yet able to conceive that Highest and Best which we name God. No limited conception will content us. Our highest and our best is no person-concept, for "person" is a limiting, and every personal relation is a limiting. We have striven for ages to find "Him." We

have sought Him under symbol and semblance and person. We shall only find, when we so know love and light and life, that we can say they are of the very nature of the Highest and the Best. We shall only fare further in our finding when we grow to the greatness of the world, when we expand to the dimensions of the true.¹

Then shall we know if we follow on to know.

¹ Emerson, "Fate."

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